



CARBAPENEM RESISTANT GRAM-NEGATIVE BACILLI Acute Care – Information for Patients and Visitors

What are carbapenem resistant Gram-negative bacilli?

Gram-negative bacilli are one of the major types of bacteria that are present in and around our bodies. Many of these bacteria cause us no harm however some Gram-negative bacteria can cause infections. Gram-negative bacilli have been developing resistance to antibiotics and one of the most recently identified resistance is to a class of antibiotics called carbapenems. This makes treating an infection difficult because of the limited choice of antibiotics available. This “carbapenem resistance” appears to be a growing problem worldwide. It is currently rare in Canada. Canadian hospitals have developed programs to identify and screen patients who might be at risk of developing an infection with this bacterium.

How is it spread?

The most common way of passing this germ from one person to another is by contact; both direct and indirect. This means that the bacteria can be spread from one person to another on their hands or by touching surfaces that have been contaminated with the bacteria. Patients who have been in a hospital outside Canada or in contact with a patient who has a carbapenem resistant Gram-negative bacteria are most at risk.

How do we prevent spreading the germ between people?

The most effective way to prevent transmission is by doing careful hand hygiene (hand washing or using alcohol based hand rub) before eating or preparing food, after using the toilet or other personal hygiene activities, before leaving your room for common/public areas and when returning to your room from public areas. Health care professionals will wear protective clothes to reduce the chance of spreading these bacteria between patients or the environment. Do not hesitate to remind healthcare workers about their hand hygiene before they provide care.

What are the risks for patients?

For healthy people these bacteria generally do not pose a threat. For those people who are ill; these bacteria may cause an infection.

What will happen when I leave the hospital?

Do not forget that bacteria are always present in and around our bodies. The most important way to prevent the spread of infection is careful attention to hand hygiene and personal hygienic practices. Bathe regularly with soap and water. Keep your bathroom environment clean; common household detergents are acceptable cleaning agents.

Source: Provincial Infection Control (PIC-NL)

December 2011