

# Carbapenemase Producing Organisms



## What are carbapenemase producing organisms (CPOs)?

CPOs are germs that can make people very sick. They are very hard to get rid of as they are strong. Most medicines that usually help us feel better do not work against them. Because of this, we pay close attention to how we take care of the people who are sick with these germs.

It is important to know that these germs can affect people in different ways. Some people may get very sick while others may not.

## How are CPOs spread?

These germs can spread from person to person when:

- someone touches open cuts or stool (poop) from the person who has CPO germs
- medical equipment is not cleaned well between patients
- hospital workers do not wash their hands

## Who can get them?

CPOs can affect anyone, but healthy people usually do not get sick because of these germs. People at risk of getting these germs include:

- People who are in the hospital (exposure to people and hospital equipment)
- People who have to stay in the hospital for a long time. There is a greater chance of being exposed to the CPO germs.
- People who must take a lot of medicine. Sometimes when someone takes a lot of antibiotics, germs can be harder to treat because the medicine stops working to kill the germs.

## How can I protect myself or my child?

- Tell your doctor if you or your child were in the hospital. Tell them if you or your child were in a hospital outside of the United States.
- Make sure anyone who is taking care of you or your child washes their hands before touching you or your child.
- Wash your hands:
  - Before making or eating food
  - Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
  - Before and after touching big cuts
  - Before touching tubes that go into your body
  - After using the bathroom
  - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

## Is there anything special I need to know about taking this medication?

- Follow the instructions for when you or your child have to take medicine
  - Always take your medication for the entire amount of time it was prescribed (if it says to take for 10 days, do not stop taking it before the 10 days are over)

## Quality/Infection Prevention

- If you do not finish the full course of antibiotics, your body may build up a resistance to the medicine. This means that the medicine may stop working to fight the germs in the future.
- Do not stop taking the medication even if you start feeling better. Be sure to finish the whole course.

### **What can we expect when in the hospital?**

Patients with CPOs are placed in special rooms. In these rooms, hospital workers wash their hands and use gowns and gloves to stop the spread of these germs. Hospital rooms and equipment are also cleaned after they are used.

### **What can I do to stop the spread?**

Wash your hands with hand sanitizer or with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Friction kills germs so remember to scrub your hands when using soap and water and/or hand sanitizer.

### **Who should I talk to if I have questions?**

Please talk to your primary care provider to get more information.