

CPE

- CPE
- [Being a CPE contact](#)

CPE (carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales) are bacteria (bugs) that live in the gut.

CPE are a type of superbug. These are bugs that are resistant to many antibiotics. This means that some antibiotics that were used to treat them no longer work very well.

How you get CPE

CPE are not very common in Ireland but people who spend a lot of time in hospital are more likely to get them than other people. This is because CPE bugs are more common in hospitals.

There's often no way of knowing where or when you picked them up.

Most of the time CPE are harmless and don't cause infection. If they stay in your gut, they will not make you sick.

Important

CPE can cause a serious infection if they get into your blood, kidneys, bladder or body tissues.

Preventing the spread of CPE

To stop getting and spreading CPE:

- [clean your hands often](#)
- clean your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet, before eating and before touching raw meat
- use your own soap, flannel, sponge and razor
- keep the toilet rim, toilet seat and flush handle clean

If you are in hospital:

- limit contact with patients and keep away from their bed space
- avoid sharing food, newspapers or other personal items with patients
- tell staff if facilities in a hospital or clinic are not clean

⚠ If you know you carry CPE

Tell the doctor when you make an appointment and when you get to the surgery or hospital. If you're in hospital, you might need to stay in your own room or a ward with people who carry CPE.

If you carry CPE, this should not get in the way of your normal home life. The CPE bug does not spread as quickly outside of hospital. It's also less likely to harm people well enough to be at home.

You do not need to limit contact with people or tell friends or family that you have CPE.

How long CPE lasts

The CPE bug can live in your bowel for months or even years. If you do not have to take antibiotics for a long time, there is a greater chance that it will fade away. If you need to take antibiotics often, it will take CPE longer to clear.

Diagnosing CPE

You might need to give samples if you're in hospital or going into hospital.

A doctor or nurse will take a sample from your poo or a swab sample from your bottom. This can feel uncomfortable but it is not painful.

The sample is then sent to a lab for testing. You should get the result back within a few days.

Symptoms of CPE infection

Symptoms of a CPE infection include:

- a high temperature
- aches and pains
- chills
- tiredness
- weakness
- confusion

Causes of CPE infection

CPE are more likely to spread to people who are already very sick.

Healthy people, including children and pregnant women, are at very low risk of CPE infection.

Things that put you at higher risk of CPE infection are:

- major surgery
- having a medical device inserted into your body, such as a catheter or IV line
- cancer treatment
- treatment in an intensive care unit or a transplant ward

Treating CPE infection

If you have a CPE infection, you can be treated with a specific type of [antibiotics](#). Common antibiotics usually will not work.

Every patient is different and the antibiotic treatment offered will be based on your individual needs.

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