

What happens when I go home?

There is no need to take special precautions at home. People in the community are usually fit and healthy so they are less likely than hospital patients to pick up CRKP. Clothes, bed linen and dishes can be washed as usual. It is always very important to wash your hands carefully after using the toilet and before preparing meals and eating to stop bugs spreading to other people. Clean hands protect you and others from lots of infections, not just CRKP.

Will I get rid of CRKP?

Your body may clear CRKP from the bowel as you recover, but this is not always the case, and it may remain in the bowel for some time. Taking antibiotics can encourage CRKP to grow in the bowel again, so they should only be taken for a very good reason. Antibiotics are available to treat CRKP infection but they will not clear CRKP from the bowel.

Developed by
Infection Control Department

436-6450 extension 6115/6147

December 2017

Infection Control Department



CRKP

**CARBAPENEM
RESISTANT
KLEBSIELLA
PNEUMONIAE**

CRKP leaflet for patients

What is CRKP?

CRKP stands for Carbapenem Resistant Klebsiella Pnuemoniae. CRKP are bugs (bacteria) that live in the bowel and that cannot be treated by certain antibiotics, known as carbapenem antibiotics. In most people, CRKP bugs are carried in the bowel harmlessly (this is called 'colonisation') and do not cause infection. However, if a patient is prone to infection and the infection is caused by CRKP, it can be difficult to treat, because many of the commonly used antibiotics will not work against CRKP.

Can CRKP be harmful?

For most patients, CRKP lives harmlessly in the bowel and does not cause infection ('colonisation'). This is because the person's immune system controls the CRKP in the bowel and prevents it from spreading elsewhere in the body. Sometimes however, CRKP can cause infection in patients, for example when they need intensive care or while receiving chemotherapy. CRKP can cause infections, such as kidney infections, wound infections or in severe cases, blood infection. Doctors need to know as soon as possible if a patient is carrying CRKP so that the most effective antibiotics can be chosen to treat the infection.

If you are going to another hospital or nursing home, your nurse or doctor will let them know about your positive CRKP result so that they can prevent it spreading to other patients.

How do people get CRKP?

Patients who have already taken lots of antibiotics are more at risk of acquiring CRKP. The reason for this is that the more bugs are exposed to antibiotics, the more likely they will develop 'resistance' to that antibiotic, so that antibiotic no longer works.

CRKP is more common in certain countries than others – if you have been a patient in a hospital abroad in the past year, you need to let your doctor know, so that you can be tested for CRKP.

CRKP is carried by patients, healthcare staff or visitors, either harmlessly or they are infected with it. It can spread between patients through direct contact with each other or by touching items or surfaces that the person with CRKP may have touched such as bed rails, toilets or equipment. As patients in hospital are much more vulnerable to infection than patients in their own homes, special precautions are required to prevent the spread of CRKP between patients in hospital.

What are the special precautions for patients with CRKP?

The precautions are designed to prevent CRKP spreading between patients on the ward. If you are found to have CRKP you will be cared for in a dedicated ward. Staff will wear gloves and aprons before coming into contact with you to protect their hands and clothes from CRKP.

How can I help?

If you go to the doctor, dentist, another clinic, hospital or nursing home, let them know you have had a positive CRKP result. They can then take special precautions to stop CRKP spreading to other patients who might be more prone to getting a CRKP infection.

Why do we need to know if a patient is carrying CRKP?

It is very useful to know if a patient is carrying CRKP before it makes them sick. If it is known beforehand that the patient is carrying CRKP then the most effective antibiotics can be chosen early to treat the infection. When staff know that a patient is carrying CRKP, special precautions as outlined above, can be put in place immediately, to stop the CRKP spreading to other patients, some of whom might be particularly prone to developing infection if they came into contact with CRKP.

Why do we need to know if a patient is carrying CRKP?

You can go home as soon as your doctor says you are ready, even if you have CRKP. Carrying CRKP will not affect your discharge.