

CRE infections – What you need to know

What are carbapenem-resistant enterobacteriaceae or CRE?

CRE are a kind of germ (bacteria) that cannot be killed by most antibiotics. This is what we mean when we say a germ is “resistant” to antibiotics.

How are CRE spread?

To get a CRE infection, you must touch CRE germs. This usually happens by touching a person who has the CRE germs but does not have any symptoms. CRE can also cause infections when they enter the body through medical devices like ventilators (breathing machines), catheters (vein or bladder), or through wounds caused by injury or surgery.

Who is likely to get a CRE infection?

People at higher risk are those who:

- * have spent time in a hospital or long-term care facility
- * are sick or have weakened immune systems
- * have wounds
- * have tubes going into their body

CRE mostly affect patients in healthcare settings that are being treated for other conditions. Healthy people usually don't get sick when they have CRE, but they may carry the germs.

What can YOU do to keep from getting CRE infections?

- Tell your doctor if you have been in a hospital in the U.S. or another country.
- Take antibiotics exactly as your doctor tells you to. Finish all your medicine, even if you feel better.
- Make sure everyone who will touch your body, or the tubes going into it, washes their hands with soap and water or uses an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Wash your own hands well and often, especially:
 - * before making or eating food
 - * before and after changing bandages
 - * after using the bathroom

What should I do if I have a CRE infection?

- Follow the plan you make with your doctor.
- Take antibiotics exactly as your doctor tells you to. Finish all your medicine, even if you feel better.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, especially before and after touching your infected areas, wounds, medical devices and after using the bathroom.
- **Tell your hospital, nursing home, rehabilitation center or other long-term care facility and your caregivers about your infection.**

If you're not sure, ask your doctor:

- What kind of infection you have. Write it down so you can tell your caregivers and family, including information to keep from spreading germs.
- How to take your medicines, especially your antibiotics
- How to care for your wound or medical device
- Any other questions you have

