

Infection Prevention and Control

Extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)

Extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) is a type of chemical known as an enzyme. ESBL is made by some germs and can stop some antibiotics from working.

Germs that can make ESBL are more resistant to many of the antibiotics commonly used to treat infections. An infection caused by ESBL-producing germs is harder to treat.

Why is it important to know if you are carrying these germs?

ESBL-producing germs are sometimes found during routine investigations. People with ESBL-producing germs often feel well with no signs or symptoms of infection. ESBL-producing germs can cause problems and this more likely to happen in people who are already unwell. If your doctor thinks the ESBL-producing germs is causing an infection, they may prescribe antibiotics.

How did I get ESBL?

It's difficult to say where you may have got ESBL-producing germs. Some people come into hospital carrying the germs, and some people pick them up in hospital. It may be due to previous treatment or due to contact with other people.



Can I stay on the same ward?

We'll try and keep you on the same ward. To stop the germs spreading, you may be moved to a single room to be nursed in isolation with the door closed.

If a single room is not available on your current ward you might need to move to a single room on another ward.

If there are several patients with the same germs on the ward, you may be nursed in a shared area with patients of the same sex.

How ESBL-producing germs spread

Like most germs, they can spread easily on unwashed hands or on equipment that isn't cleaned correctly.

How can we stop it spreading?

Careful hand washing and use of alcohol gel are the best ways to stop the spread of these germs. We encourage everyone to wash their hands or use the alcohol gel provided.

Staff will wear gloves and aprons to protect their hands and uniforms when doing specific tasks.

Nursing staff can advise you about cleaning any clothing or soiled items whilst you're in hospital.

Can I have visitors?

Yes. Your friends and family can continue to visit you. They don't need to wear gloves or aprons unless they're involved in hands-on nursing care.

It's important your visitors wash their hands when they arrive and before they go home.

Patient Information

What happens when I am ready to leave hospital?

If you are otherwise well, ESBL should not delay your discharge. You do not need to take any special precautions when you get home.

If you are admitted to any hospital in the future:

Tell our nurses and doctors you have been ESBL-positive in the past.

Infection Prevention and Control Team

The IPCT help staff with the prevention and management of all infections across the Trust. You can contact them by telephone or by post:

Infection Prevention and Control Team

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Clifford Bridge Road, Coventry CV2 2DX

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

024 7696 4791

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 4791 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

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