



EXTENDED SPECTRUM BETA-LACTAMASE PRODUCING BACTERIA (ESBL)

Information Sheet for Patients and Visitors

What are ESBLs?

ESBL-producing bacteria are a group of bacteria that produce enzymes called 'beta-lactamases'. These enzymes break down commonly used antibiotics, making them ineffective. In that case, a different antibiotic may need to be used to treat the infection. Some people carry ESBL-producing bacteria but do not have an infection.

How are ESBLs spread?

ESBL-producing bacteria can be spread to other people directly through touch, if hands are unwashed, or indirectly by contact with soiled equipment and, particularly urine-care equipment such as catheters and urinals.

What special precautions are required for ESBLs?

- You may be in a room by yourself or with someone that has the same bacteria
- A long-sleeved gown and gloves will be worn by everyone who cares for you including your visitors
- A sign will be placed on your door to remind others who enter your room about the special precautions
- The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly
- You must clean your hands before you leave your room, after using the bathroom, if your hands are soiled and before you eat or drink.
- Before leaving your room, visitors and caregivers must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container and the linen hamper located in your room. Then they must clean their hands.

What will happen at home?

If you have ESBL at the time of discharge home, everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet should wash their hands after contact with you. You should wash your hands before you make any food, before you eat and after using the toilet. If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least weekly with a household cleaner.

Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses or other care providers that you have ESBL. This helps prevent spread to others and helps your doctor choose the right antibiotics if necessary.