Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

# Carbapenem-Resistant *Enterobacteriaceae* (CRE) Infection

## 1. What are Carbapenem-Resistant *Enterobacteriacea* (CRE)?

CRE are a family of germs that are hard to treat because they are highly resistant to antibiotics.

- **Carbapenems** are a group of antibiotics that are usually used to treat serious infections that are resistant to other antibiotics.
- **Enterobacteriaceae** are bacteria found normally in the human intestines (gut).

## 2. Who is at risk for CRE infection?

Many people can carry the germ without it producing an infection. People being treated for other conditions in acute and long-term healthcare settings are at the highest risk for CRE infection. Hospital patients who have weak immune systems or have tubes in their bodies for medical treatment can be at risk for CRE infection.

## 3. How are CRE spread?

Most CRE infections happen in healthcare settings like hospitals and clinics. CRE is spread through person-to-person contact with infected wounds or stool (poop). CRE can also enter the body through medical devices like catheters (tubes that remove liquid from the body), and ventilators (breathing machines).

## 4. Can CRE be treated?

There are few options available for treatment. Some cases may be untreatable. It's important to talk to a doctor if you have CRE infection.

## 5. How can you prevent CRE?

- Tell your doctor if you've been hospitalized in another facility or country.
- Take antibiotics as directed by a healthcare provider.
- Ask your healthcare providers to wash their hands with soap and water before and after your care if you notice that they haven't done it.
- Clean your own hands often, especially before preparing or eating food, before and after changing wound dressings or bandages, after using the bathroom, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Ask questions during your treatment if anything is unclear.

### CRE are an emerging threat to public health.

- CRE germs in hospitals have increased from 1% to 4% in the past 10 years.
- 42 states have reported CRE infections in the past 10 years.
- CRE kills up to half of patients who get CRE bloodstream infections.
- CRE can grow and spread resistance to other bacteria. In the future, this may cause untreatable infections in healthy people.

### For more information:

**Los Angeles County, Department of Public Health**
http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/CRE.htm

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/cre/index.html

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