

Patient Education

ESBLs While in the Hospital



What are ESBLs?

ESBL-producing bacteria are a group of bacteria that produce enzymes called 'beta-lactamases'. These enzymes break down commonly used antibiotics so that the antibiotics don't work and 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.

Special Precautions for ESBLs

It is important that special precautions are taken to stop ESBL from spreading to other patients in the facility. These precautions include:

- Single room accommodation (the door can remain open).
- A long-sleeved gown and gloves may be worn by everyone who cares for you.
- A sign may 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.
- Everyone who leaves your room must clean their hands well.
- You must clean your hands before you leave your room.

Family and Visitors

Your family and visitors may visit you. Your family and visitors should not assist other patients with their personal care as this may cause the germ to spread. They may be required to wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves while in your room. Before leaving your room, visitors 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.

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Good Hand Hygiene Practices

Remind all staff and visitors to practice good hand hygiene before and after they touch you. Ask your nurse or doctor to demonstrate proper hand hygiene techniques (15 seconds of soap and running water OR alcohol-based hand rub until hands are dry).

You need to clean your hands:

- **After using the bathroom.**
- **After blowing your nose.**
- **Before eating and drinking.**
- **Before and after you touch your dressing or wounds.**
- **When your hands are visibly dirty (soiled).**
- **Before you leave your room.**

What will happen at home?

If you have ESBL at the time of discharge from hospital, the following practices are recommended:

- Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet should wash their hands after contact with you.
- Wash your hands before you make any food and before you eat. This practice should be followed by everyone in the household.
- Wash your hands well after using the toilet. Make sure others that use the bathroom wash their hands well afterwards.
- Clothing may be laundered in the usual manner, and along with, the rest of the household laundry.
- No special cleaning of furniture or items (e.g. dishes) in the home is required.
- If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least weekly with a household cleanser.
- 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.

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