

## LENGTH OF STAY IN HOSPITAL?

Not all people with an ESBL infection will be in hospital, patients can be discharged into the community if they are well enough.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS TO HEALTHCARE WORKERS, FAMILY, FRIENDS AND VISITORS?

With good basic standards of hygiene there are no risks of acquiring this infection from others. The use of alcohol hand gel is promoted within health care settings.

**This leaflet gives general advice. For further information please ask either the nursing or medical staff who are providing your care and treatment or contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team on 01386 502552.**

If you would like this leaflet in a different language, larger print size, in audio, Braille or any other format please contact the

PALS team by phone on

☎ 01905 760020;

by letter ✉ Communications,  
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**Worcestershire  
Health and Care**  
NHS Trust



## ESBLs

### EXTENDED SPECTRUM BETA

### LACTAMASE

### *What is it?*

### *Your questions answered*

**An Information Leaflet  
for  
Patients and Staff**

## WHAT IS IT?

Beta Lactamase is an enzyme produced by a bacteria that can destroy antibiotics and stop them from working. This is one of the ways bacteria can develop resistance to antibiotics which makes them harder to treat.

## WHAT INFECTIONS DOES IT CAUSE?

The most common specimen with an ESBL-producing bacterium is urine; often those patients have had multiple courses of antibiotics for repeated infections. It can also cause infections of blood and sputum. The bacteria can be colonised within the body, usually the gut, and not cause any symptoms.

## HOW DO YOU FIND OUT SOMEONE HAS AN ESBL?

A specimen—perhaps a urine or sputum sample will have been sent to the laboratory, either for routine testing or because staff were concerned that an infection may be present.

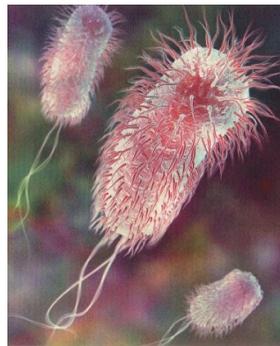
## WHO IS AT RISK?

The majority of those with an ESBL producing strain are over 65 years old but it can affect people of all ages including:

- Patients who have been taking antibiotics or who have previously been hospitalised.
- People within the community who have not had any health care interventions.

## HOW IS IT TREATED?

If there are signs and symptoms of an infection it will be treated with antibiotics. There are two oral antibiotics that are effective against such infections.



## HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Exactly how it spreads is still being determined. The bacteria has been found in faeces of humans and also farm animals. Contamination of food such as raw meat, by bacteria from animal faeces, is also thought to lead to infections in humans.

It can also spread from person to person on contaminated hands. The genes that produce ESBLs can also be passed between different bacteria, so it is not just spread of a single bacteria but spread of the gene between different bacteria.

Spread is made easier if bacteria normally present in the gut (which help to protect against other infections) are killed by taking of antibiotics. Use of a wider but necessary range of antibiotics may explain why this has become an issue now.

## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT THE SPREAD OF IT?

Infection control measures to consider:

- Good hand hygiene which is essential.
- Promotion of good cough hygiene, particularly if a productive cough is present.
- Antibiotics should only be used if required.

Within care homes and hospitals infection control procedures are in place including:

- Use of protective clothing i.e. disposal gloves and apron.
- Appropriate cleaning, drying and storage of equipment.
- Appropriate environmental cleaning.
- Isolation may be necessary in a some cases.