

## Information for those diagnosed with CPO

This information letter is for you if you have tested positive for a specific group of bacteria called CPO. CPO or "carbapenemase-producing organisms" are bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics commonly used to treat infections.

CPO are no more pathogenic or infectious than other bacteria. Most often, you will simply have the bacteria in your gut as part of your gut flora. The finding therefore has no immediate consequences for you or your relatives when you are not hospitalised. However, if you get an infection with CPO, it is more difficult to treat effectively with antibiotics.

If you are hospitalised, you will be tested to see if you still have CPO in your gut flora (stool sample or rectal swab). You will have a one-bed hospital room, and the staff will wear protective gowns and gloves during examinations and treatment. This is to make it easier for the staff to prevent other patients in the hospital from becoming infected with the bacteria.

### How are CPO transmitted?

Transmission occurs primarily through close contact with other people and most commonly after hand contact. Normal socialising with other people poses only a minimal risk of infection. It is thus okay for you to go to work, to the sports centre/fitness centre/aquatic centre and to go shopping. The same applies when visiting family and friends and when having guests in your home.

### What can you do to avoid infecting others?

CPO are mostly gut bacteria excreted in the stool, and when present on the skin the bacteria are mainly found in the crotch. Good hand hygiene is therefore very important after *every* toilet visit. This way you avoid spreading the bacteria to others.

- Good hand hygiene is:
  - Washing your hands with soap and water.
  - Drying your hands with a disposable towel or your own towel (each family member should have their own towel).
  - When your hands are dry, you may use hand sanitizer (hand disinfectant with the skincare product glycerol added).

### Can CPO carrier state be treated?

There is no treatment for CPO carrier state, but in some people the bacteria disappear on their own.

### Treatment of infections, including infection with CPO

If you get an infection and need antibiotics, you should inform the healthcare professional that you are a CPO carrier, as this can help you get the right treatment.

CPO rarely cause serious infections requiring treatment, but it can happen during illness and debilitation. In particular, urinary tract infections and bloodstream infections require treatment with special antibiotics.