

Multi-resistant Gram-Negative Organisms (MRGN)

Frequently Asked Questions

What are MRGN?

Gram-negative organisms are a group of bacteria many of which normally live in our bowel and are collectively known as Enterobacterales (previously known as Enterobacteriaceae). They can also be found in the female genital tract and on the skin around the groin area.

Worldwide, concerns have been raised regarding the increasing number of infections caused by MRGN, particularly those that have become resistant to a type of antibiotic called carbapenems. These are antibiotics that are used as a last resort when patients have serious infections that are resistant to most other treatments.

Common names you may hear associated with MRGN are:

- > CRE or CPE (carbapenem-resistant members of the family Enterobacterales)
- > ESBL (Enterobacterales that are resistant to a range of antibiotics).

How did I get MRGN?

MRGN are generally associated with long term use of many different types of antibiotics in hospital, especially those used in intensive care and other specialised units where people are usually sicker and require intensive medical treatment.

At present, infections caused by CRE/CPE are rare in Australia and are usually associated with medical care received overseas particularly in Greece, India and South-East Asia. Infections with ESBL are more common. Many people who have acquired a MRGN have no ill effects; this is called colonisation.

How are MRGN spread?

MRGN are usually spread from person to person through direct skin to mouth contact (usually via the hands) from a person who is already infected or colonised with MRGN, or by contact with shared items that may be contaminated, such as shared toilets and frequently touched surfaces including door handles, taps and benches. It is therefore important that people who are known to have MRGN are placed under special precautions whilst in hospital in order to prevent spread to other patients.

What does it mean to have MRGN?

People may not know that they are carrying MRGN and may never develop an infection. However, if people who are colonised with a MRGN have an operation or a medical device inserted such as an intravenous drip or wound drain, they become at risk of getting an infection. Treatment choices are then limited because of the resistance to many of the antibiotics usually used to treat the infection.

What happens when I am in hospital?

If you have received medical care overseas or live in a nursing home in Australia you will have some simple screening tests on admission to hospital. These may involve taking a rectal swab, faeces, or urine specimen.

If you are found to have a MRGN you may be cared for in a single room and health care staff will wear gloves and a gown when caring for you. You will be asked to regularly wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub and to stay in your room where possible, unless you need to be transferred for special tests or treatment. Hospital staff will advise you if different instructions are necessary.



What about family and visitors when I am in hospital?

It is quite safe for family and friends to visit you whilst in hospital. However, visitors are strongly advised to wash their hands after visiting you. Hand washing is the most important way to prevent the spread of MRGN (and other infectious diseases such as flu and gastro).

If visitors or family help you with care such as assistance with dressing or showering then they may be asked to wear gloves and a gown.

How can I prevent the spread of MRGN when I go home?

To prevent the spread of MRGN to other people when you are at home, it is important that you follow these precautions:

- > Wash your hands with soap and water and dry thoroughly after going to the toilet or before preparing food.
- > Keep surfaces such as benchtops, bathrooms and toilets clean.
- > Use your own towels and face cloths. Do not share these items with other people.
- > Make sure you follow instructions and advice provided by your doctor or healthcare provider on how to care for wounds or manage medical devices.

No special requirements are needed for your clothing and towels, eating utensils and dishes. They can be washed in the normal way using detergent or laundry powder. Extra disinfectant is not needed.

You do not have to tell anyone (other than health professionals) of your MRGN status.

What should I do if I require admission to hospital or receive health care in the community?

You should always inform the health care worker that you have had a MRGN infection or colonisation in the past. This will assist them to ensure they provide the appropriate care for you.

How long am I likely to carry MRGN?

The amount of time you carry MRGN in the bowel varies a great deal and depends on several factors, such as your overall health, presence of any indwelling device such as a urinary catheter, and whether you need to continue taking antibiotics for any reason. Because of this, you may be re-screened when admitted to hospital again in the future to see if you are still carrying MRGN.

Where can I find more information on MRGN?

You can speak with your Doctor or Health Professional or access more information from the following SA Health web pages:

Infection prevention and control: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/hospitalinfections

For more information

**Infection Control Service
Communicable Disease Control Branch
11 Hindmarsh Square
Adelaide SA 5000
Telephone: 1300 232 272
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au**

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