

# Extended Spectrum Beta-lactamase (ESBLs)

## What are Extended Spectrum Beta-lactamase (ESBLs)?

Extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBLs) are enzymes made by some bacteria (germs) that can make them resistant to certain antibiotics. This means the medicine made to kill the bacteria no longer works.

These bacteria can be found in many parts of your body but are normally found in your bowel.

Common infections the bacteria may cause include pneumonia, urinary tract or bladder infections, and wound infections.

## Who Usually Gets an ESBL Infection?

Anyone can get an infection caused by an ESBL bacteria. You have a higher risk if you:

- have been in a hospital for a long period of time
- have open wounds, catheters or drainage tubes
- are on a ventilator.

Your risk also increases if you have a weakened immune system and have taken many antibiotics.

## How is ESBL Found?

ESBL is found by a lab test of the infected area.

## How is ESBL Treated?

If you have an infection caused by an ESBL, you will receive antibiotics. You may meet with an infectious disease specialist to talk about the infection. You may also meet with an infectious disease specialist to talk about the infection.

## How is ESBL Spread?

ESBL can be spread by:

- direct contact with a person (including a health care worker) who has the bacteria on his or her unwashed hands
- indirect contact, such as touching equipment or a surface with the germ on it.

## How Will the Hospital Health Care Team Take Care of You?

- You will be moved into a private room.
- Anyone who has contact with you needs to wash his or her hands. This applies to health care providers and visitors who come into and leave your room. They will need to wash their hands well with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. How to wash hands:
  - Lather well.
  - Use friction to all hand surfaces (including under the fingernails) for 15 seconds.
  - Rinse well.
  - Pat hands dry.

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- All health care providers who give you care will wear hospital gowns and gloves. If family members are helping give care, they will need to wear gowns and gloves too.
- Equipment needed for your care will be kept in your room. This includes items such as a blood pressure cuff or a thermometer.

## **What about Family and Visitors?**

Members of your care circle (family members and friends) can visit but they must wash their hands with soap and water or use the alcohol-based hand rub before leaving the room.

Visitors may have close contact with you such as hugging, kissing and hand holding. You are not a risk to members of your care circle or to healthy people.

## **What About at Home?**

People should wash their hands often, especially after using the bathroom. There are no other precautions needed.