

Multi-Drug Resistance Organisms (MDROs) in Acute Care

What are MDROs?

Multi-drug resistant organisms (MDROs) are germs that can live in your gut (digestive system). You might hear the terms carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) or carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE). These are types of MDROs. These germs do not cause an infection in healthy people, but the germs can cause an infection if they spread to other parts of the body such as the blood, lungs, or bladder.

People who get an infection are usually already very ill for other reasons. Infections caused by these germs are difficult to treat because the antibiotics doctors usually give do not work. Therefore, it is important to reduce the spread of MDROs to other people.

Why am I being tested?

Because these germs can cause serious infections in some people, we might check if you carry the germs even though you do not show signs of infection.

We always check patients who:

- have had any type of health care outside of Canada in the last 12 months
- have travelled to India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh in the last 12 months (people who have traveled to these countries are more likely to be carrying these germs in their gut)
- have possibly been close to other patient(s) who are found to have these germs

Family members and visitors do not need to be tested, even if they have travelled or had healthcare outside of Canada, because MDRO rarely cause problems or infections outside of hospitals.

How is this test done?

The screening test usually involves a rectal swab. A small cotton swab is put into the rectum, rotated gently, and removed. The sample is sent to the laboratory for testing. It can take a few days for test results to come back.

Can MDROs be treated?

MDROs are germs that can live in your gut or other parts of your body. If you develop an infection caused by MDROs, your doctor chooses the antibiotics that will work for these germs.

How to prevent MDROs from spreading

In the hospital

If your tests show that you have MDROs in your gut, this means that you are a 'carrier' of MDROs.

To prevent these germs from spreading to others while you are in the hospital:

- Stay in your hospital room as much as possible.
- Clean your hands often with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, especially before and after using the toilet, before and after eating or drinking, and before leaving your room.
- **Do not** use common areas, such as the patient kitchen, gift shop, or cafeteria. You can go to other areas of the hospital for treatments and tests needed for your care.
- If you must walk around, ask your healthcare provider when and where you may walk and if any special equipment is needed.




How to prevent MDROs from spreading

In the hospital - *continued*

Isolation

While waiting for test results, or if you are a MDRO carrier, you will be 'in isolation' to prevent MDROs from spreading to other patients in the hospital.

Being **in isolation** means:

- We post an isolation sign on the door of your room.
- We put on gloves and wear a gown over our clothing while taking care of you. 
- We ask you to use your own washroom or commode (toilet on wheels).
- **Do not** share your washroom or commode with other patients or your visitors.
- We ask your visitors to clean their hands before entering and after leaving your room. 
- If your tests show that you have MDROs in your gut, anyone entering your room must wear gloves and a gown every time they enter your room.
- Healthcare providers and visitors remove their gown and gloves, and clean their hands every time they leave your room.

At home

Healthy people have a low risk of becoming MDRO carriers. However, follow these instructions to prevent MDROs from spreading to others.

- Wash your hands often, especially after going to the bathroom and before preparing and eating food.
- People who live with you should wash their hands often.
- **Do not** share personal care items such as towels, toothbrushes, or bar soap.
- Clean bathrooms and other frequently touched surfaces (for example, light switches, and water taps) once each day and more often if visibly soiled.
- Wash non-disposable cleaning cloths after each use.
- Keep a clean bandage on open draining wounds.

If you have to return to the hospital

Tell the nurse or doctor that you are a carrier of 'MDRO' so you can be tested again.

To learn more, it's good to ask

- Your family doctor
- Your pharmacist
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online at www.HealthLinkBC.ca.