

## ESBL (Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase)

### What is an ESBL?

ESBL stands for Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase. It is an enzyme produced by bacteria, which breaks down and destroys some antibiotics, such as penicillins and cephalosporins antibiotics, which are widely used antibiotics in many hospitals. These bacteria are known as ESBL producers.

ESBL producing bacteria (germs) are commonly found in the bowel/gut of humans, e.g. *E. coli*. People who have been on antibiotics are more likely to have these bacteria.

### How are ESBL producing bacteria spread?

ESBL can be passed from person to person usually on the hands and from contaminated items, equipment and sometimes via food.

### How might ESBL affect me?

People can carry ESBL producers without any ill effects and no infection being present. This is called “colonisation” (carrying without signs of infection).

Infection from ESBL producing bacteria occurs mainly in the urinary tract but may also infect wounds and sometimes causes blood poisoning.

You may be nursed in a single room or with other patients carrying ESBL producing bacteria. This is to minimise the risk of these bacteria spreading to other vulnerable patients. This will not affect the care you are given.

### How is ESBL treated?

Although ESBL producers are resistant to many antibiotics, there are still antibiotics available for the treatment of clinical infections. Your doctor will discuss antibiotic treatment with you if this is required.

Colonisation may continue after successful treatment of the infection. Further antibiotics are not recommended to clear this colonisation.

### Where can I get more information about ESBL?

More information is available from the Infection Control Team at the hospital.

Telephone: 0118 322 6914.