



ESBL (Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase) & AmpC (AmpC Beta-lactamase)

This leaflet is for patients, relatives and visitors and explains what having Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase (ESBL) and AmpC Beta-lactamase (AmpC) means and how it is managed.

What is ESBL & AmpC?

Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase (ESBL) and AmpC Beta-lactamase (AmpC) are enzymes produced by bacteria, which breaks down and destroys some antibiotics such as penicillins and cephalosporins (antibiotics that are widely used antibiotics in hospitals). These bacteria are known as ESBL/AmpC producers.

ESBL and AmpC 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/AmpC producing bacteria spread?

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

How might ESBL/AmpC affect me?

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

Infection from ESBL/AmpC 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/AmpC 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/AmpC treated?

Although ESBL/AmpC 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 required.

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

Questions and concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about ESBL/AmpC, please ask your nurse for further information or you can contact the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Infection Control team on 0118 322 6914, email: infection.control@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

United Kingdom Health Security Agency ESBL

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extended-spectrum-beta-lactamases-esbls-treatment-prevention-surveillance/extended-spectrum-beta-lactamases-esbls-faqs>

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Simon Wells, RBFT Infection Prevention & Control, October 2024.

Next review due: October 2026