

Multi-resistant Acinetobacter

This leaflet is for patients, relatives and visitors and explains what having multi-resistant Acinetobacter means and how it is managed.

What is Acinetobacter?

Acinetobacter is a type of bacteria (germ) that is found in the environment, for example it can be found in the soil and surface water. It is found harmlessly on the skin of healthy people.

In the majority of people, the bacteria will simply stay on the skin causing no problems (known as colonisation). However, in some vulnerable people Acinetobacter can cause pneumonia, urine, wound and blood stream infections.

Some strains of Acinetobacter are resistant to antibiotics; these are called multi-resistant strains and can be difficult to treat.

Does it need treatment?

No treatment is required if it is living harmlessly on the skin (colonisation).

However, if you have an infection caused by Acinetobacter then you will be given appropriate antibiotics. Your condition will be monitored to ensure that the correct treatment is given to you.

How is it spread?

It is mainly spread by person to person contact, for example on hands. It can also be spread through contaminated surfaces and equipment.

What precautions are taken to stop it spreading?

If you have a multi-resistant strain of Acinetobacter, you will be nursed in a side room to prevent the spread of infection and people providing direct care will wear protective clothing. Attention will be given to environmental cleaning.

It is very important that thorough hand hygiene is carried out, washing hands with soap and water or alcohol hand rub.

Are my family or friends at risk?

Acinetobacter is not a risk to healthy individuals, including babies and children. There is no need for visitors to wear aprons and gloves whilst visiting. However, all visitors are encouraged to wash their hands or use alcohol rub before entering and leaving the side room.

Questions and concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about multi-resistant Acinetobacter, 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.

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

Simon Wells, RBFT Infection Prevention & Control, October 2022. Next review due: October 2024

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