

*You can stop
the spread of
ESBL-producing
bacteria by
keeping your
hands clean.*

Living With an Extended-Spectrum Beta Lactamase-Producing Bacteria

This brochure is a supplement to the guidelines from your healthcare team. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your care team.

Extended-spectrum beta-lactamases (ESBLs) are enzymes made by some types of bacteria. ESBLs break down and destroy some antibiotics. This makes it hard to treat infections caused by ESBL-producing bacteria.

There are 2 ways you can have ESBL-producing bacteria. You can be infected with the bacteria or be colonized (a carrier).

- If you are infected — You have symptoms. The symptoms depend on where you have the infection.
- If you are colonized — The bacteria is present on or in your body, but does not cause infection or an illness.

The most important things to do if you are living with ESBL-producing bacteria include:

- **Good personal hygiene. This is the best way to prevent the spread of ESBL-producing bacteria.**
- Keep your hands clean. You may use an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. Always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Clean your hands with soap and water if they are visibly soiled.
- Take care of yourself — eat healthy, exercise, do not smoke and avoid stress.
- Keep skin infections covered until they are healed to avoid spreading ESBL-producing bacteria to others.

How to stop ESBL-producing bacteria from spreading

ESBL-producing bacteria live in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. They are spread by direct contact with people who have ESBL-producing bacteria or touching items used by them, such as toilets, bed rails, and commodes.

The best way to stop the spread of ESBL-producing bacteria is to keep your hands clean. Use a paper towel to dry your hands or a cloth specifically for this purpose. Clean your hands often and at these times:

- Before preparing food, eating or drinking
- Before and after touching your eyes, nose, mouth, genitals, sores, acne, boils or rashes
- Before and after blowing your nose

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before and after using the bathroom
- After touching urine, feces (stool) and body fluids, including items soiled with body fluids, such as bedding
- Before and after changing bandages
- After cleaning the bathroom, changing bedding and doing laundry
- After touching surfaces other people touch, such as phones, doorknobs or shopping carts

These are other actions you can take to prevent the spread of infection:

- Carry hand sanitizer to clean your hands if you do not have soap and water.
- Keep your fingernails short to keep the bacteria from growing underneath.
- Avoid touching, poking or squeezing sores.
- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Throw tissues in the trash after each use.
- Clean cuts or scrapes with soap and water, and cover them with a bandage. Get medical care if there is redness, swelling, pain or pus
- Bathe or shower with soap every day and after playing sports or working out at the gym
- Do not share towels, razors, toothbrushes or other personal items.
- Change your clothes every day and wash them before wearing them again.
- Wash sheets and towels regularly.
- Avoid contact sports, public gyms, saunas, hot tubs, pools, manicures, pedicures and massages until sores have healed.
- Thoroughly clean your bathroom.
- Wear gloves and wash your hands if you have touched urine or feces

Special precautions

If you have an ESBL-producing bacteria infection, please follow these special precautions when you visit a clinic or hospital:

- Ask your care team to wash their hands before and after caring for you.
- Tell your care team if you have ever had an active ESBL-producing bacteria infection or if you are a carrier.
- If you are in a healthcare facility, your care team may use isolation precautions. Staff may wear gowns, gloves and/or masks to care for you.

Cleaning your home

ESBL-producing bacteria can live on surfaces for days, weeks or months. It is important to clean surfaces often with a disinfectant. Pay attention to items that are used often, such as light switches, doorknobs, phones, toilets (including the handle), sinks, tubs, faucet handles, kitchen counters, appliance handles, cell phones and computer keyboards.

You can use any cleaner that has the word “disinfectant” on it. Be sure to read the label and follow the directions.

If you do not have a store-bought disinfectant, you can make a solution of bleach and water.

1. Mix 1 tablespoon of bleach with 1 quart of water.
2. Put the solution in a spray bottle.
3. Label it “bleach solution.”

Make a fresh solution each time you plan to clean. Over time, the solution becomes less effective as the bleach evaporates out of the water.

For your safety:

- Never mix bleach with other cleaners, especially ammonia. This can create a dangerous, toxic gas.
- Keep the bleach solution away from children, and do not put it in bottles that could be mistaken for something to drink.

If body fluids or pus get onto a surface, follow these steps:

1. Put on disposable gloves.
2. Wipe up the fluids with a paper towel.
3. Throw the paper towel in the trash.
4. Clean the surface thoroughly using disinfectant and a paper towel.
5. Throw the paper towel in the trash.
6. Wipe the surface again with the disinfectant and let it dry for at least 30 seconds.

For more information

- Go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at [cdc.gov/hai/organisms/ESBL.html](https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/ESBL.html)
- Contact your local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) at 217.782.2016 (TTY: 711)