

*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 provider. Please discuss any questions or concerns with your healthcare provider.

Extended-spectrum beta-lactamases (ESBLs) are enzymes produced by some types of bacteria (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 a carrier (“colonized”).

- Infected — You have symptoms. The type of symptoms depends on the location of the infection.
- Carrier — 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 right, exercise, do not smoke and avoid stress.
- Keep skin infections covered to avoid spreading ESBL-producing bacteria to others.

How to stop the spread of ESBL-producing bacteria

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 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

Other actions you can take to prevent the spread of infection include:

- Carry hand sanitizer to clean your hands if soap and water are not available
- 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
- Dispose of tissues after each use
- Clean cuts or scrapes with soap and water and cover with a bandage. Seek 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
- Avoid sharing 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 handled 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 healthcare providers to wash their hands before and after caring for you.
- Tell your healthcare providers if you have ever had an active ESBL-producing bacteria infection or if you are a *carrier*.
- If you are in a healthcare facility, you may be placed on isolation precautions. Staff may wear gowns, gloves and/or masks to care for you.
- Visitors should report to the nurses' station for directions on what to do to enter your room.

Cleaning your home

ESBL-producing bacteria can live on surfaces for days, weeks and 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, pagers and computer keyboards.

Disinfectants to use:

- Use any cleaner you can buy at the grocery store that has the word “disinfectant” on it. Be sure to read the label and follow the directions.
- If a store-bought disinfectant is not available, make a solution of bleach and water. Mix 1 tablespoon bleach with 1 quart of water. Place in a spray bottle and 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

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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 at 217.782.2016