

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CPOs

## What are CPOs?

CPOs are carbapenemase-*producing* organisms. These are bacteria (germs) that are resistant to many types of antibiotics including carbapenems. Carbapenems are antibiotics used when other common antibiotics don't work. These germs can spread quickly in healthcare settings.

## Who gets CPOs?

Healthy people usually don't get a CPO. You are more at risk if you get a lot of medical care, have tubes or devices going into your body, or live in a healthcare facility. People taking antibiotics for a long time, or many times, may be more likely to get CPOs. People who receive medical care in areas where CPOs are more common (in other states or internationally) are more likely to get a CPO. Not everyone who has a CPO gets sick from it.

## Can CPOs be treated?

Yes. Antibiotic options that will work against CPOs are limited. People who are colonized with a CPO (i.e., they have the germ, but are not sick) do not need antibiotics.

## What can I do to prevent the spread of CPOs?

If it is recommended for you, get tested for CPOs. If you test positive, it is important that you and the people that care for you wash their hands. Healthcare staff may also need to wear gloves and gowns so they don't carry the bacteria with them after providing you care.

## WHY AM I BEING TESTED?

You may have been exposed recently to a person who was cared for at a facility that has a CPO. Testing you will help us know if this bacteria has spread to others and prevent it from spreading further. Preventing the spread is very important so that these resistant bacteria don't become common in our community.

## What is the test?

People carry this kind of germ in their gut. The best way to test for these bacteria is to swab your anus. A healthcare provider will gently insert just the tip of a soft swab that looks like a Q-tip into your rectum, gently rotate it, and then remove it. It is not painful. You can use the swab yourself, but it may lower our ability to find the bacteria.

## How will I get the results?

We'll have a result within a few days. If you test positive, the health department will call you and let you know. We'll also share the information with your medical team. If you test negative, you won't hear from us.

## Do I have a choice to be tested?

Yes, providing a swab is voluntary. You can choose to decline testing. However, knowing if you carry the bacteria can help your doctor make better treatment decisions for you.

### Resources

Learn more: <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/cre/cre-patients.html>

Contact the Oregon HAI Program: [healthoregon.org/hai](http://healthoregon.org/hai)