

Testing for CRO: carbapenem-resistant germs (organisms)

Infection Prevention

Last reviewed: May 2026

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Information for Patients

Leaflet number: 244 Version: 4

What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet will explain:

- What CRO means
- Why we test for it
- What the test is like

What CRO means?

CRO stands for **Carbapenem Resistant Organisms**.

- This means some germs (bacteria) do not respond (resistant) to very strong antibiotics called carbapenems. Carbapenems are a powerful group of antibiotics that are often used to treat infections when other antibiotics have failed.
- You can carry CRO in your body and feel completely well.
- Sometimes CRO can cause infections in people who are already unwell.

Why am I being tested?

We may need to test you because:

- You have stayed in a hospital recently
- You were in a place where someone else had these germs
- The ward you are on tests all patients

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

We do the test **when you arrive (on admission) or before your planned admission.**

This test is important. Finding people with CRO germs helps us stop the spread in our hospitals. It makes sure that powerful antibiotics can still be used to treat severe infections in the future.

What is the test?

The test is simple. It takes only a few seconds you will have **1** of these:

1. **A rectal swab.** We will use a small swab (like a cotton bud) and put it gently just inside your bottom (rectum).

Or

2. **A poo sample.** If you need to go to the toilet for a poo the staff can take a swab of the poo instead.

It takes 1 to 3 days to get the results.

Sometimes we can find CRO in other places of the body. We can find it in your phlegm, a wound swab, a wee (urine) sample, or even in the blood.

What if my test is positive?

It means you are carrying the CRO germ in your gut (bowel). A positive result does not mean you are ill. CRO can be carried harmlessly in the gut of humans and animals without any symptoms. We do not always know exactly why someone gets CRO germs.

You may get CRO germs from:

- taking antibiotics often or for a long time
- a weak immune system
- are already unwell
- are in hospital

You only need treatment if you have an infection. We will treat an infection with specific antibiotics for the CRO germ. Infection can happen if the CRO germs get into the body:

- through broken skin (wound)
- in wee (urine)
- chest/lung
- blood

During your stay in hospital?

If you have a positive CRO test, we will do the following to stop the spread of CRO:

- Move you to a **single room** if you are not already in one.
- Staff will wear gloves and aprons when they are in your room. Before leaving the room staff will remove the gloves and apron and wash their hands with soap and water.
- We will give you a toilet chair (commode) to use in the single room. This is if you do not have access to a toilet in the room (en-suite).
- We will put a sign on your room door. This is to remind staff the need for hand hygiene and wear gloves and apron.
- You must wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after visiting the toilet. Clean your hands before eating with hand sanitiser or a hand wipe provided on your meal tray. Please ask the staff if you need help to do this.
- Do not touch medical devices (if you have any) like drains, catheter tube or intravenous drip. Do not touch devices that enter your body or skin.
- You should avoid touching any open wounds or broken skin.

Visitor Advice

To keep everyone safe, visitors should:

- **Clean their hands** when they arrive and when they leave. Visitors should also always wash their hands with soap and water before they leave your room.
- Not sit on your bed.
- Not visit if they feel unwell. Visitors who have had a recent infection or illness should ask the nursing staff for advice.
- Visitors only need to wear gloves and apron if they are helping with your personal care. This could be helping you use the toilet or having a wash/shower.
- If visitors are seeing other people in hospital/nursing home on the same day it is best if they see you last.

People with a weak immune system, children and babies can pick up infections more easily, please ask for advice.

At home with CRO germs

- You do not need to take any action or change your social activities.
- We will let your GP know about your CRO positive result when you are discharged from hospital.
- Keep washing your hands.



- Your laundry can be washed normally. If they are soiled with body fluids wash these separately at the warmest temperature on the label.
- You can continue with leisure and social activities as normal.

Back into hospital?

- If you come to hospital for an appointment or any treatment, it is important that you let the staff caring for you know that you have previously had a positive test for CRO.
- Letting staff know this is part of your medical history helps plan your care safely. It helps staff take the right precautions to protect you and others. It makes sure you get the most suitable treatment.

Preventing the spread of infection at Leicester's hospitals

- The infection prevention team works to reduce infections.
- They use evidence based policies. They review them often.
- They check infection rates across the hospitals.
- They report any risks and trends to our Infection Prevention Assurance Committee, our Board of Directors and the UK Health Security Agency.

Contact details:

Infection Prevention Team: **0116 258 5448**

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على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
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