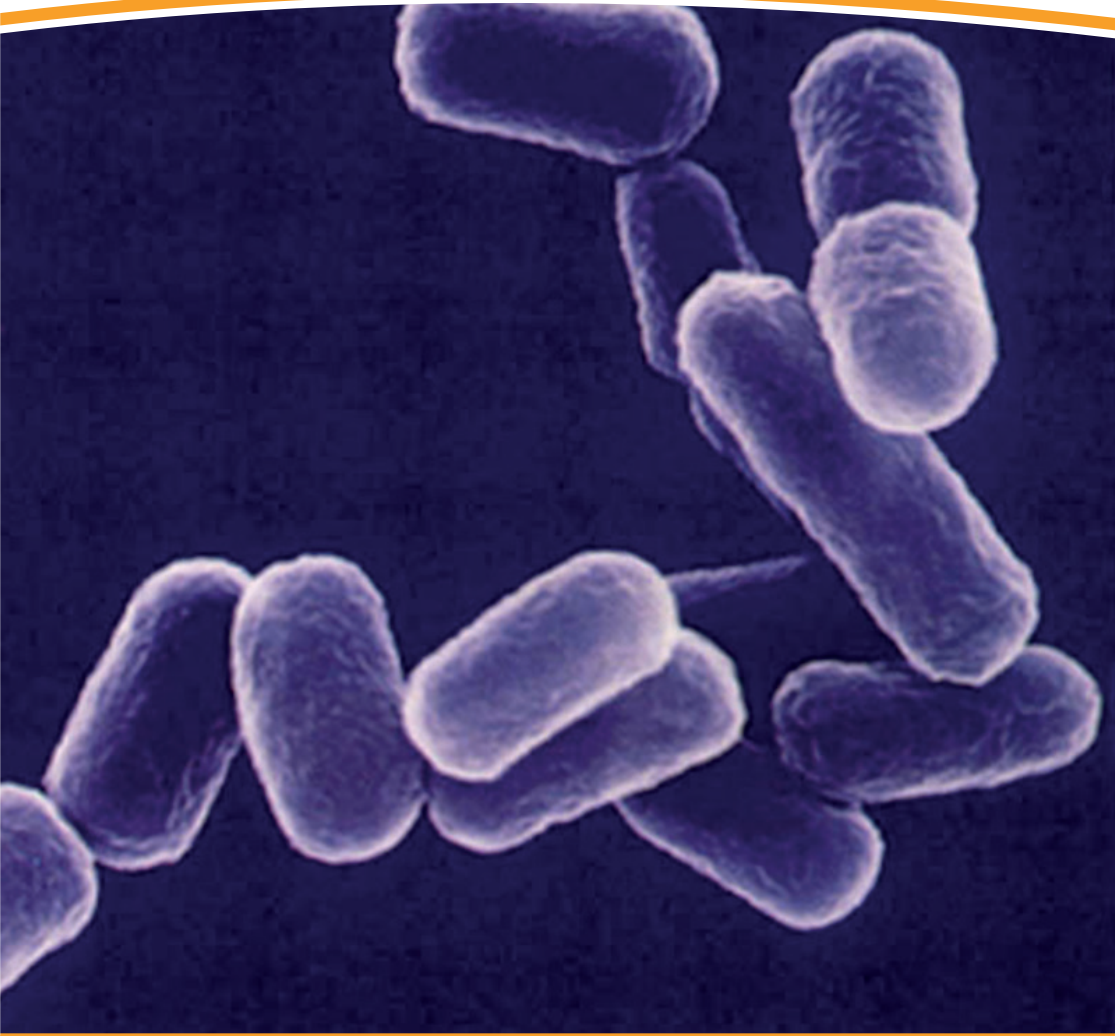


St Margaret's
Hospice Care

ESBL

Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamase
For patients and carers



What is ESBL?

ESBL stands for Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamases. ESBLs are bugs (bacteria) that live in the bowel. Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamases (ESBLs) are enzymes produce by some bacteria, which can break down certain types of antibiotics, preventing them from working.

ESBL producing bacteria are resistant to some of the antibiotics used to treat the infection when it occurs, this makes it more difficult to treat. Infections of this type are usually treated with specific antibiotics.

Can ESBLs be harmful?

The most common bacteria that produce these enzymes are E.coli and Klebsiella which are bacteria that can live in your bowel without you being unwell or showing any signs or symptoms of infection (this is referred to as colonisation).

However, sometimes ESBLs can cause infection in patients. For example when a person needs intensive care or while receiving chemotherapy.

The bacteria cause infection if they get into an area of the body where they are not normally found, such as the urinary tract.

Urine infection is the most commonly diagnosed infection, but infection in the lungs, wounds and blood can also occur.

How are ESBLs spread

As with other bacteria, ESBL producing bacteria can spread from person to person on unwashed hands or equipment that is contaminated or has not been sufficiently cleaned.

How can it be treated

There are a number of factors that make a person more likely to become colonised or infected with ESBL producing bacteria.

These include:

- Taking repeated courses of antibiotics
- A prolonged stay in hospital or hospice
- Having a urinary catheter
- The elderly
- Having other medical problems

Your questions answered

How can ESBL be treated?

Despite being resistant to many commonly used antibiotics, treatment options are still available should infection occur. If antibiotic treatment is necessary your doctors will discuss this with you.

How do we care for patients with ESBL?

If you are found to be colonised or infected with ESBL producing bacteria you may be transferred into a single room to help prevent the spread of infection and minimise the risk to other patients who may be more vulnerable to the risk of infection.

How do we stop ESBL spreading?

We take special precautions with patients who have ESBL in order to stop ESBL spreading to others. Staff will:

- Carry out regular cleaning, changes of bed linen
- Wash and dry their hands thoroughly before and after giving care
- Wear gloves and aprons when they carry out care and cleaning rooms

Will ESBL harm my family and friends?

All healthy visitors are unlikely to be affected by ESBL. Visitors will be requested to wash their hands or use an antimicrobial hand rub on entering and leaving the room.

Please do not allow your visitors to sit or lie on your bed. If your visitors have been unwell in the last 48 hours please ask them not to visit until they are feeling better.

Will I get rid of ESBLs?

Your body may clear ESBLs from the bowel or urine as you recover, but this is not always the case and it may remain in the bowel or urine for some time. Taking antibiotics can encourage ESBLs to grow again, so they should only be taken for good reason.

What happens when I go home?

You may be discharged from the hospice before your infection has cleared. The infection will not affect your family and friends when you are at home. Restriction of activities or visitors is not necessary. Usual personal hygiene and household cleaning is sufficient.

Any personal clothing should be laundered separately from the rest of the family at the highest temperature the fabric will allow. Tumble drying also helps to kill the bacteria.

St Margaret's Hospice Care Taunton Hospice,

Heron Drive, Bishops Hull, Taunton, TA1 5HA

 01823 333822

St Margaret's Hospice Care Yeovil Hospice,

Little Tarrat Lane, Yeovil, BA20 2HU

 01935 709480

 CRC@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk

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