Prevent the spread of ESBL

KEEP YOUR HANDS AND ENVIRONMENT CLEAN

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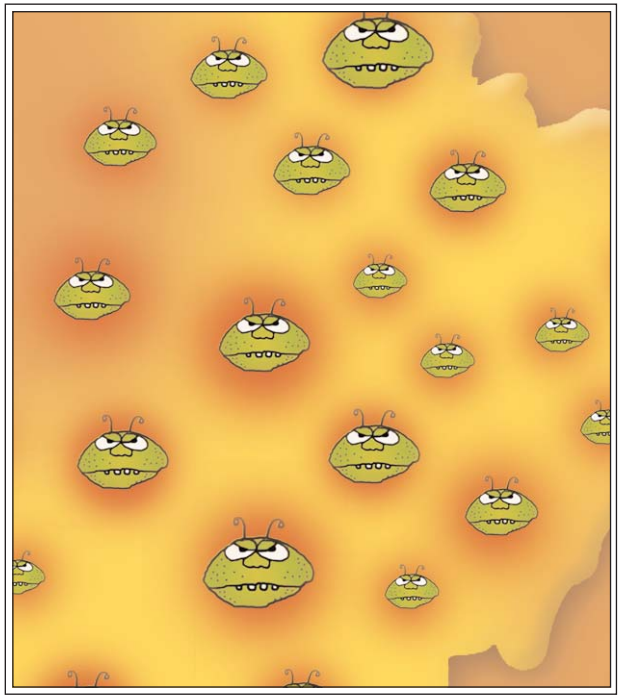
Good hand hygiene is one of the single most effective measures for preventing the spread of infection.

When facing a hidden enemy like ESBL, other prevention measures help too:

- Prudent use of antibiotics is always helpful in reducing resistance developing in bacteria.
- Standard infection control precautions.
- Maintaining a clean and safe environment.

Staff, visitors and patients should always be encouraged to practice good hand hygiene.

COLONISATION



ESBL bacteria produce enzymes resistant to certain antibiotics.

Some people can carry ESBL bacteria in the body without showing any symptoms... simple infection control precautions can stop them spreading further.

ESBL FACTS

(E)xtended (S)pectrum (B)eta-(L)actamase is an enzyme produced by some bacteria that conveys resistance to certain antibiotics

Transmission

ESBL enzymes are normally produced by micro-organisms in the bowel, such as *E.coli* and Klebsiella. The enzymes break down antibiotics (making them ineffective), and subsequently infections become more difficult to treat.

These bacteria are spread from person-to-person both directly by faecal contamination of the hands and indirectly by the surrounding environment.

Illness

E.coli are common bacteria causing infection in humans, usually urinary tract infections (UTIs). These can progress to cause more serious infections in the blood. ESBL-producing strains of the infection are more difficult to treat due to their antibiotic resistance.

Sometimes people can carry ESBL bacteria in the body without showing any symptoms. This is referred to as 'colonisation'.

Treatment

Whilst ESBLs are resistant to a number of antibiotics, there are still options available should a person show symptoms of clinical infection.

Exclusion

As ESBLs are resistant to a number of antibiotics, those identified to have either an infection or colonisation with these organisms may be managed in a single-room for the course of their treatment, dependent upon the healthcare setting.

Notification

Whilst it is not a notifiable disease, there is a voluntary national surveillance programme being developed.

Prevention

Prudent use of antibiotics is always helpful in reducing resistance developing in bacteria.

Standard infection control precautions should always be followed, paying particular attention to hand decontamination before and after contact with patients.

Visitors and patients should be encouraged to practice good hand hygiene.

Thorough cleaning should also be undertaken to maintain a clean and safe environment.

Reference

HPA - frequently asked questions http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/esbl/faqs.htm [accessed on-line, 19th April 2007]