

Carbapenem-Resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* (CRAB) For Long-term Care Facilities



Acinetobacter baumannii is a type of bacteria commonly isolated from environmental samples, including soil and water. Many members of the *Acinetobacter* genus are considered environmental organisms, however *Acinetobacter baumannii* is almost exclusively found in health care environments.

A. baumannii is an opportunistic pathogen, affecting people who are immune-compromised due to other comorbidities. CRAB bacteria have developed resistance to a group of antibiotics called “carbapenems,” which are often used for treating severe infections caused by other resistant bacteria.



How is CRAB spread?

CRAB is most often spread person-to-person in health care through direct contact with infected or colonized residents, via health care workers' hands following care of those residents, or from the bacteria's persistence in the resident's environment.



Who is at risk for CRAB?

- ▶ **Healthy individuals do not usually get CRAB infections.** Nursing home residents, especially those with long hospital stays, open wounds, tracheostomies, or invasive devices like ventilator use or urinary catheters are at risk for infection.
- ▶ Residents with weakened immune systems, chronic lung disease, or diabetes are also at risk for infection.



How are CRAB infections treated?

- ▶ The most commonly prescribed antibiotics are not effective against CRAB infections. Treatment decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis by a health care provider.
- ▶ Colonized residents not showing active signs of infection do not need to be treated or decolonized.



Why is CRAB prevention important?

- ▶ Infections caused by CRAB are more difficult to treat and are associated with an increased mortality and health care costs.
- ▶ Carbapenem resistance can be easily transmitted to other bacteria and lead to widespread antibiotic resistance. *Acinetobacter* can live on skin and may survive in the environment for months.
- ▶ Careful attention to infection prevention measures, such as hand hygiene, the proper use of gowns and gloves, thorough environmental cleaning, and use of dedicated equipment and supplies can help reduce the risk of transmission.

See other side for more information 





How can I help prevent the spread of CRAB?

- ▶ **Hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and water is the most important measure to prevent the transmission of CRAB.**
 - ▶ Hand hygiene should be done before and after changing dressings, providing resident care (e.g., bathing, dressing, changing linen), before and after accessing indwelling devices, before preparing or eating food, and after using the bathroom.
 - ▶ Residents should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene often.
- ▶ Caregivers' finger nails should be kept short and clean.
- ▶ Place colonized and infected residents in enhanced barrier precautions (EBP). This includes use of gown and gloves during high-contact activities, including dressing, bathing, transferring, providing hygiene, changing linens, assisting with toileting, device care, and wound care, but does not require room restriction. See the [CDC EBP guidance](#) for full details. Whenever possible, place residents in private rooms. Other residents on the same unit with wounds or invasive devices should also be placed in EBP. During an outbreak situation or with suspected transmission, additional precautions may apply.
- ▶ Increase the frequency of environmental cleaning and disinfection, especially high-touch surfaces.
- ▶ Whenever possible, use single-use, disposable non-critical equipment or dedicate equipment to one patient. Thoroughly clean and disinfect all patient care equipment after use.
- ▶ Medical waste should be disposed of immediately after use in the normal trash. It does not need to be “red bagged.”
- ▶ Launder clothing, sheets, and other linen using facility-appropriate laundry detergent and dry completely before using.
- ▶ Clearly communicate the resident's MDRO status upon transfer to any health care facility and to ancillary service (e.g., dialysis, podiatry) providers so proper precautions can be taken in those settings.

For questions, please contact the Wisconsin Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Prevention Program at **608-267-7711** or dhswhaipreventionprogram@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

