

Carbapenem-Resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* (CRAB) For Patients and Visitors



Acinetobacter is a type of bacteria that can be found in soil and water. It can also live on surfaces in hospitals and nursing homes (for example, floors, counter tops, and sinks). There are many types or “species” of *Acinetobacter* and all of them can make people sick.

One specific type of *Acinetobacter* called *Acinetobacter baumannii*, is the most serious. Many antibiotics do not work against it; for example, carbapenem antibiotics, which are used to treat many types of infections. This specific bacteria is then called carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii*, or CRAB.



How is CRAB spread?

- ▶ CRAB can be spread from person to person in health care settings (hospitals and nursing homes) when someone has contact with a person who has CRAB or by touching surfaces with CRAB on them.
- ▶ **Healthy people do not usually get sick from CRAB.** People staying in health care facilities, especially for long periods of time, are more likely to get sick from CRAB.
 - ▶ If a patient is on a ventilator, has open wounds, has a tracheostomy, or has any invasive devices (for example a catheter) they are more likely to get sick from CRAB.
 - ▶ People who have weakened immune systems, chronic lung disease, or diabetes are also at higher risk.



What are the treatment options?

- ▶ CRAB infections are hard to treat because of the antibiotic resistance. People who get sick from CRAB may have to stay in the hospital longer and may have more serious complications.
- ▶ *Acinetobacter* is often resistant to many antibiotics. Treatment should be made on a case-by-case basis by your doctor.



Why is CRAB prevention important?

- ▶ Carbapenem resistance can be easily spread among bacteria and widespread resistance could happen unless prevention steps are taken.
- ▶ *Acinetobacter* can live on skin and may be able to live in the health care environment for a long period of time. Proper handwashing and surface cleaning can reduce the risk of spreading CRAB.

See other side for more information





How can I help prevent the spread of CRAB?

- ▶ Clean hands before preparing or eating food, before and after changing wound dressings, after coughing or sneezing, after blowing your nose, and after using the bathroom.
- ▶ Clean hands before entering or leaving a patient's or resident's room.
- ▶ Wear gloves when handling body fluids (urine, wound drainage, etc.), when providing care, or when in contact with surfaces that have body fluids on them. Hands should be cleaned immediately after removing gloves.
- ▶ Place disposable items soiled by body fluids (dressings, catheter or tracheostomy supplies, used gloves, etc.) in the trash immediately.
- ▶ Disinfect household surfaces daily using standard household cleaning products with particular focus to kitchen and bathroom surfaces.
- ▶ Wash used clothing, sheets, and linens using standard laundry detergent and make sure items are completely dried in a dryer before using. Do not share bathroom towels with other household members.
- ▶ Used dishes and utensils can be handled and washed as usual.
- ▶ Tell all your doctors and health care providers (dialysis, podiatrist, nursing home staff, etc.) when you had CRAB to reinforce good communication of all past serious infections.

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

