

## What can I do to help?

In order to help prevent the spread of EBSL into the environment, please wash your hands especially after using the toilet.

You can ask the staff looking after you to wash their hands or use alcohol hand rub and wear an apron and gloves giving you any care.

## What will happen when I go home?

At home, you will need to ensure you practise good hand washing.

If you are admitted to another hospital please let the staff looking after you know you have had a positive EBSL result.

Also let your GP know.

## How can I get more information?

The Infection Prevention and Control nurses visit each ward at least once per day; ask your nurse to contact us.

Alternatively, you can telephone the Infection Prevention and Control Team in the hospital on 4433 1181.

## Contact details

### Infection Prevention and Control

Townsville University Hospital  
100 Angus Smith Drive  
Douglas QLD 4814

**Phone:** (07) 4433 1181

Townsville Hospital and Health Service  
100 Angus Smith Drive, Douglas QLD 4810

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# ESBL

## Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase

A guide for patients and families of the  
Townsville Hospital and Health Service



## What is ESBL?

Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase (ESBL) is an enzyme produced by some bacteria, which breaks down antibiotics.

ESBLs are produced by strains of bacteria found in the bowel such as E.coli or Klebsiella and makes these bacteria resistant to many antibiotics used to treat serious infections.

## What can ESBL cause?

ESBL can be carried on the skin and may cause no problems.

In some cases the bacteria cause infections. The most common place to have an ESBL is in urine, but also can be found in wounds, sputum or blood.

## How is ESBL treated?

If you are a carrier of ESBL you will not need any treatment but you need to be cared for in a way that prevent transmission of the ESBL to other patients.

If you have an ESBL infection you will be treated with some of the antibiotics which are still effective against these bacteria.

## Who is at risk of infection?

People who are already ill or have an impaired immune system and have been admitted to hospital are more susceptible to infection.

## How does ESBL spread?

It is spread by direct physical contact with a person with a ESBL infection or their surroundings. This includes touching sheets, dressings, bedding and hospital equipment.

It is often spread by hands and that is why hand hygiene is so important.

**It is OK for you to ask staff if they have washed their hands prior to touching you.**



## What will this mean for my hospital care?

All patients who have a positive result for ESBL are managed with special precautions to prevent the spread to other patients.

Ideally, you will be nursed in a single room and the staff will wear an apron and gloves to care for you.

An alert sign will be placed outside your door to inform all staff of the precautions required before giving you care.

You are still able to move outside your room, but please wash your hands. Avoid visiting other patients in the hospital.

Your visitors only need to wash their hands before visiting you and when they leave unless they are visiting other patients in the hospital. In that case they should also wear an apron and gloves when visiting you.

ESBL does not usually pose a threat to healthy people, hospital staff, family members or close contacts.