CARBAPENEM RESISTANT *ACINETOBACTER* PATIENT FACT SHEET

What is Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter*?
Acinetobacter is a type of bacteria (germ) commonly found in the environment (such as in soil and water and on hospital surfaces). Sometimes these germs carry pieces of DNA that help them make something called carbapenemases, which makes them resistant to a powerful group of antibiotics called carbapenems, making them difficult to treat. This DNA can also be shared with other germs, which can also make them resistant and difficult to treat.

Who can get Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter*?
Very sick patients who stay at a healthcare facility for a long time are the most likely people to become infected with Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter*. These infections typically occur in patients who are on breathing machines (ventilators), have devices such as catheters, have open wounds from surgery, are in intensive care units, or have very long hospital stays. It is also possible for healthier patients to carry Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* in or on their bodies and not know it; this is called "colonization." Colonized patients might not become sick from Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* but are able to spread these germs to other very sick patients through the healthcare environment.

What are the symptoms of Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter*?
Symptoms of a Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* infection can vary depending on how and where a patient is infected. This is because there are many parts of the body that can become infected, such as the urinary tract, an open wound, or the respiratory track. People who are colonized with Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* don't have any symptoms.

How is Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* spread?
Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* can live on the skin and in the body and may survive in the environment, such as surfaces in a hospital, for several months. It can spread from one person to another through contact with contaminated surfaces or medical equipment or through contaminated hands.

How is Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* treated?
Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* infections are generally difficult to treat due to the germ being resistant to commonly used antibiotics called carbapenems. However, if you are diagnosed then your doctor will use laboratory tests to better understand what antibiotics will work best at getting rid of your infection. There is currently no treatment for patients who are colonized with Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter.*

How can people protect themselves against Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter*?
Patients and caregivers should keep their hands clean by washing their hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially before and after caring for wounds or touching a medical device. Healthy people may get Carbapenem Resistant *Acinetobacter* on their skin but can easily wash it off with soap and water or fight it off with their immune system. It is also important to follow the precautions that are recommended when you are in a healthcare facility, and to keep the healthcare environment clean.

Where can I get more information?
Information can be found at www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/acinetobacter.html or https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/healthcare-associated-infections-hais or by emailing doh.hai@dc.gov.

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