



What are CPOs and why are they a problem?

CPOs are multidrug-resistant organisms that have enzymes, called carbapenemases, and are highly resistant to last-line antibiotics called carbapenems. These organisms can share carbapenemases between bacterial species and spread easily among sick patients in healthcare settings. Infections caused by CPOs are difficult to treat and have a high risk of death. Enterobacterales, *Acinetobacter*, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* are common organisms with carbapenemases.

CPOs in or on the body without symptoms

Colonization means patients have CPOs on their skin or in other body sites without symptoms. Patients can remain colonized with CPOs for a long time. Patients can spread CPOs to surfaces and objects around them and to other patients.

How are CPOs spread?

CPOs spread by contact with patients infected or colonized with a CPO. CPOs are also spread to patients indirectly through healthcare workers' hands and on contaminated shared medical equipment and high-touch surfaces. Sink drains and toilets can be reservoirs contributing to transmission.

Who is at risk?

Hospital patients and long-term care facility residents are at risk, especially those who:

- Receive complex medical care, including those who have invasive medical devices
- Have long-term overuse of antibiotics
- Need help with activities like toileting, bathing, and dressing
- Have severe or chronic wounds
- Were admitted to the same room or unit as a person with a CPO
- Received inpatient healthcare or medical procedures outside the US in the last 6 months

How can facilities prevent the spread of CPOs?

- [Notify](#) all healthcare providers on CPO status, even when transferring a patient
- Test patients for CPOs to guide infection control actions in healthcare facilities
- Perform frequent hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR). Use soap and water if hands are soiled or ABHR is not available
- Wear a gown and gloves when caring for patients with a CPO
- Clean and disinfect the patient environment, sink areas, and any shared medical equipment with [EPA-registered](#) products effective against CPOs
- Make sure PPE, disinfectants, and ABHR are accessible at the point of patient care
- Keep patient care items at least three feet away from sinks
- Do not discard patient waste, beverages, or sources of nutrients in sinks