



# Carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacterales* Information for Horse Owners



## What is carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacterales* (CRE)?

- Carbapenems are antibiotics that are reserved for resistant infections.
- CRE is a group of bacteria (e.g., *E. coli*, *Klebsiella*) that can cause severe infections in pets and people and is resistant to carbapenems and other antibiotics, making them challenging to treat.

## Where did my horse get this bacteria?

- *Enterobacterales* can live in the gastrointestinal (i.e., colon and rectum) and urogenital tracts of healthy people and horses. These bacteria can have antibiotic resistance without causing illness. Horses that carry these bacteria but are not sick are called colonized.
- When CRE spreads to other body sites (such as the lungs, urinary tract or wounds), horses can develop infections and become sick.
- CRE can be spread by contacting an infected (sick) or colonized (not sick) individual, usually through hands, feces, bodily fluids (wounds, urine, saliva), or by contact with a contaminated surface.

## Can CRE spread to my other horses and family?

- It is possible to share CRE between animals and people, but the risk is considered low.
- Immunosuppressed family members should avoid contact with CRE-infected horses during treatment.
- Everyone can reduce spread by washing hands.
- Anyone concerned about CRE exposure or illness should consult their healthcare provider.

## How can we treat my horse?

- There is **NO** benefit to screening healthy horses or treating horses that are colonized with CRE but not showing clinical signs.
- If your horse is infected with CRE, your veterinarian will determine the best antibiotic treatment.
- Follow your veterinarian's guidance exactly for antibiotic treatment and follow-up care.

## General precautions

- While your horse is being treated, minimize its contact with other animals and people.
- Keep infected wounds covered and wear gloves to change bandages.
- Clean and disinfect common areas, wash racks or tack stalls after use, and do not use pressured water to clean as bacteria might become airborne.
- Follow the manufacturer guidelines when using cleaning products.
- Wash your hands after feeding, petting, or cleaning up after your horse; wash hands and face and change clothes if your horse snorts on you.

## Where can I find more information?

- Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory  
(785) 532-5650 <http://www.ksvdl.org/>
- MU Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory  
(573) 882-8367 <https://vmdl.missouri.edu/>
- CDC FAQs about CRE for Pet Owners  
<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/cre/FAQ-Owners.html>

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