

# Carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* Information for Veterinarians

My Small Animal Patient has been diagnosed with a CRPA, now what?



## What is carbapenem-resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (CRPA)?

- CRPA infections are resistant to drugs such as imipenem and meropenem as well as many other antimicrobials.
- Isolating CRPA has public health implications because CRPA can cause severe infections that are difficult to treat in both pets and people.

## Where did my patient get this bacteria?

- *Pseudomonas* is found in the environment and can be normal flora colonizing people and pets.
- *Pseudomonas* grows well in moist environments.
- Pets can acquire CRPA from the environment or from contaminated surfaces or equipment in the clinic. Transmission from a colonized or sick person or pet can occur via direct contact or bodily fluids.
- In pets, infections typically occur when CRPA spread to compromised sites (otitis, wounds, UTIs).

## Is there risk to my staff and other patients?

- It is possible to share CRPA between pets and people, but the risk is believed to be low.
- Immunosuppressed veterinary staff and patients should avoid contact with CRPA patients when possible.
- Everyone can reduce spread by washing hands.
- Anyone concerned about CRPA exposure or illness should consult their healthcare provider.

## How can I treat my patient?

- Do **NOT** screen healthy pets for CRPA. Do **NOT** treat colonized pets with no clinical signs; you cannot decolonize a pet.
- CRPA infections can be challenging to treat; consult with a pharmacologist, microbiologist, or infectious disease specialist as needed.
- Remove any implants, and drain and clean wounds.
- Consider topical antiseptics/antimicrobials for skin or wound infections (silver sulfadiazine).
- Clean ears thoroughly prior to applying antimicrobials.

## General precautions

- Isolate hospitalized CRPA patients and minimize staff caring for them.
- Wear gloves, gowns, and masks when handling a CRPA patient, cleaning ears/wounds, changing bandages, or handling bodily fluids.
- Wash hands after all contact with CRPA patients.
- Discard any item (e.g., soap containers, mops) suspected to be contaminated. Be careful to not cross-contaminate hospital surfaces and equipment.
- Choose a disinfectant effective against *Pseudomonas*, and follow manufacturer guidelines closely (e.g., dilution, storage, contact time).

## 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: *Pseudomonas* in Healthcare Settings <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/pseudomonas.html>

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This flier was originally developed by researchers at the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University and the University of Missouri, and is funded in part by FDA Veterinary Laboratory Investigation and Response Network (U18FD006990).