

## ***Klebsiella* Fact Sheet**

1. **What is *Klebsiella*?** – *Klebsiella* is a type of Gram-negative bacteria that can cause different types of infections, including urinary tract infections, pneumonia, bloodstream infections, wound or surgical site infections and meningitis. *Klebsiella* is a significant cause of healthcare associated infections (HAIs). Increasingly, *Klebsiella* bacteria have developed antimicrobial resistance, most recently to the class of antibiotics known as carbapenems. *Klebsiella* bacteria are normally found in the human intestines (where they do not cause disease) and are also found in human stool.
2. **How is *Klebsiella* spread?** - *Klebsiella* bacteria are mostly spread through person-to-person contact and, less commonly, by contamination of the environment. As with other healthcare-associated infections, the bacteria can be spread in a healthcare setting via the contaminated hands of healthcare personnel. The bacteria are not spread through the air. Patients in healthcare settings also may be exposed to *Klebsiella* when they are on ventilators (breathing machines), or have intravenous (vein) catheters or wounds (caused by injury or surgery). Unfortunately, these medical tools and conditions may allow *Klebsiella* to enter the body and cause infection.
3. **Who is at risk for getting infection with *Klebsiella*?** *Klebsiella* infections can occur outside of the healthcare setting, even in healthy people. In hospitals and other healthcare locations, *Klebsiella* infections commonly occur among patients who require devices such as ventilators (breathing machines) or intravenous (IV) catheters, and patients who are taking long courses of certain antibiotics.
4. **How can I prevent the spread of *Klebsiella*?** - There is no vaccine to prevent *Klebsiella* infections. Therefore to prevent the spread of infections, healthcare workers should follow specific infection control precautions, such as wearing gowns and gloves when entering a room of patients with *Klebsiella*-related illness. Patients and healthcare providers should clean their hands very often, including:
  - a. Before preparing or eating food
  - b. Before touching their eyes, nose, or mouth
  - c. Before and after changing wound dressings or bandages
  - d. After using the restroom
  - e. After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - f. After touching hospital surfaces such as bed rails, bedside tables, doorknobs, remote controls, or the phone

5. **What should I do if I think I have *Klebsiella*?** The only way to identify a *Klebsiella* infection is to collect and test appropriate specimens in the laboratory. Any concerns about *Klebsiella* should be directed to your healthcare provider.
6. **Are *Klebsiella* infections treatable?** - *Klebsiella* infections can be treated with antibiotics. However, some *Klebsiella* bacteria have become highly resistant to antibiotics. When bacteria such as *Klebsiella pneumoniae* produce an enzyme known as carbapenemase, then the class of antibiotics called carbapenems will not work to kill the bacteria and treat the infection. These organisms, referred to as KPC-producing bacteria, can be very difficult to treat. Laboratory tests must be run to determine which antibiotics will treat the infection. Persons diagnosed with a *Klebsiella*-related illness must follow the treatment regimen prescribed by the healthcare provider. If the healthcare provider prescribes an antibiotic, patients must take it **exactly** as instructed and **complete** the course of medication, even if symptoms are gone.
7. **Is it possible that my *Klebsiella* infection will come back?** If treatment stops too soon, and you do not complete the course of medication prescribed by your healthcare provider, some bacteria may survive and your symptoms may return. In addition, people can be reinfected with *Klebsiella* after appropriate treatment.
8. **What should I do if someone I know has a *Klebsiella* infection?** - If you are healthy, there is a very low risk of acquiring a *Klebsiella* infection. It is still necessary to follow all precautions, particularly hand hygiene, which is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.
9. **For more information about *Klebsiella*:**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/organisms/klebsiella/klebsiella.html>

This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your physician for specific clinical information related to you.