

Cystic Fibrosis & Burkholderia Cepacia (B. Cepacia)

People with Cystic Fibrosis (CF), may develop chronic infection of their lungs by a variety of different bacteria. Some people with cystic fibrosis become infected by a drug resistant bacteria, Burkholderia cepacia (B. cepacia), which can occasionally be spread from person to person or object to person. This is of great concern because of the limited number of antibiotics available to fight this bacteria. This handout is designed to educate you about what you can do to avoid contracting or spreading B. cepacia.



The primary goal is to prevent transmission of B. cepacia between CF patients. Every patient with CF at National Jewish Medical and Research Center is automatically tested for B. cepacia when their sputum is cultured. Ask your health care provider what you grew in your sputum. B. cepacia is not a health risk to people with a normal immune response, including health care workers.

Preventing the Spread of B. Cepacia

Please practice the following guidelines to prevent the spread of B. cepacia:

- **The best way to prevent infection is good handwashing with soap and water.** Handwashing should be done before and after contact with others, or contact with objects or surfaces that have become contaminated with respiratory secretions. Not only do patients have to wash their hands, but nurses, doctors, therapists and aides do as well.
- **Use common sense and practice good hygiene when in the clinic or hospital.** Use a tissue to cover your mouth when coughing and be sure to throw the tissues away after coughing in them. Wash your hands after coughing, particularly before coming in contact with other people with CF.
- **People who have B. cepacia should avoid close contact with other people with CF.** It is difficult to suddenly stop seeing old friends, however try to limit your contact, and definitely avoid transferring respiratory secretions. The telephone, or e-mail, may be ways to continue communication.

- If you have B. cepacia, try to avoid sitting in a waiting area with other people with CF. To assist you, National Jewish has a protocol in place. Whenever possible, try to schedule your clinic visit at the end of the day. After checking in, you should be escorted directly to an exam room. If this is not possible, you will be asked to have a seat in the waiting area. If it becomes necessary for you to share a waiting area with other people with CF, you should wear a mask, to aid in the control of your respiratory secretions.
- In addition to B. cepacia, Pseudomonas and other bacteria can become resistant to antibiotics. At National Jewish we will also help identify patients colonized with these resistant bacteria. Similar infection control procedures will be used.
- Please help us provide a safe environment for people with CF by following these guidelines.

Visit our website for more information about support groups, clinical trials and lifestyle information.

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NOTE: This information is provided to you as an educational service of National Jewish Health. It is not meant to be a substitute for consulting with your own physician.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 119 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit njhealth.org.