

# Going home with an Antibiotic Resistant Organism (ARO)

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## What is an Antibiotic Resistant Organism (ARO)?

- AROs are bacteria (germs) that can cause infection.
- AROs can sometimes be found on parts of the body without causing an infection or making you sick. This is called the “carrier state”.
- Antibiotics are used to treat infection caused by bacteria, but AROs are not killed by common antibiotics. There are different AROs. These are:

- MRSA
- VRE
- ESBL
- CPE/CPO
- Other

## Clean your hands

When you go home, continue to clean your hands well:

- after touching dirty surfaces
- before eating
- before preparing meals
- after using the toilet or changing a diaper
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- after using equipment or other items shared by others

## How long will it take for the ARO to go away?

This is hard to predict. Depending on your health, it could take just a few weeks or it might take months to years to go away.

## **Can the ARO come back?**

Yes, the ARO may come back, especially if you get sick and have to take antibiotics.

## **Can family members get the ARO?**

There is a slight chance of spreading the ARO to a family member. A family member who is ill has a higher chance of getting an ARO. Cleaning your hands well before and after contact with each other will help prevent the spread of the ARO.

## **Is it safe for babies and young children to visit?**

If the baby or child is sick, delay the visit until after he or she is well. The most important thing you must do is to clean your hands well before and after contact. It is okay to kiss and hug babies and children.

## **I have pets. Can they pick up AROs?**

- Yes. Pets can carry AROs.
- They can pass it to you and you can pass it to them.
- Before and after you pick up and touch your pet you need to clean your hands.

## **Will having an ARO affect my activities at home?**

- We want you to get back to your normal activities. You can visit friends and family who are in good health.
- Visitors who are sick may be at risk of getting your ARO. Visitors who are sick should delay their visit until they are well. All visitors and household members should clean their hands before and after contact.
- You can go shopping.
- You can resume sexual activities.
- Do not share personal care items.

## **Do I need to clean my hands or bathe with special soap at home?**

No. Washing with regular soap is fine. A liquid hand soap with a pump is the best for getting rid of bacteria from your hands. Remember to use friction and wash all hand surfaces for a minimum of 15 seconds. Dry your hands on your own personal towel or use paper towels. You can also use hand sanitizer if your hands are not visibly dirty.

## **Do I need to eat a special diet at home?**

If you have been on antibiotics for a while, your intestines (bowel) will have lost many of the normal bacteria which grow there and help to keep you healthy. It is important to eat a well-balanced diet for the normal bacteria to come back.

- To learn more about healthy eating, Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide is available online:  
[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html)

## **Do I need to wash my clothes separately from the rest of the family?**

No. Wash clothes with household laundry detergent on a regular cycle. If your clothes are heavily soiled with body fluids, like poop or urine, pre-soak and then wash them separately with detergent.

## **Are there special instructions for house cleaning?**

- Keep a regular cleaning schedule with routine household products. The most important rooms to keep clean are the bathroom and the kitchen.
- If you are not able to do any cleaning, you will need to inform the people who plan your care when you return home.
- Tips for cleaning:
  - Wet the surface well and clean using good friction.
  - Allow the surface to air dry.
  - Pay special attention to areas that may be soiled with stool such as the toilet and sink. Remove any stool and then clean as described above

## **Do I wash my dishes separately?**

No. Dishes can be washed by hand with soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.

## What should I do if I need further health care?

When any further health care is needed, please let the health care worker know that you have an ARO. You may still be a carrier for your type of ARO even though you feel well and it is causing you no harm. You need to give this information:

- when you go to the dentist
- when you go to a hospital or clinic
- anytime you need to give a medical history

Although healthy people are not a high risk of picking up your ARO, sick people might not be able to fight it off. The greatest risk of spreading your ARO is in the hospital. If you have to go to the hospital, you will be checked and may need Contact Precautions (isolation).

### For more information visit:

Dietitians of Canada website:

<http://www.dietitians.ca/your-health/nutrition-a-z.aspx>

Public Health Agency of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/antibiotic-antimicrobial-resistance/about-antibiotic-resistance.html>

**Adherence to Infection Prevention and Control measures by staff and visitors is required to prevent further spread of infection.**

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.  
Clean your hands.**



This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask Infection Prevention & Control or your health care provider.