

NIH Clinical Center Patient Education Materials

Surveillance cultures for *Acinetobacter*

What is *Acinetobacter*?

- *Acinetobacter* is a germ normally found in soil or water.
- *Acinetobacter* can resist treatment by some antibiotics.
- It can be found in our bodies without causing an infection (called “colonization”). It can also cause an infection that may be difficult to treat.
- You can get *Acinetobacter* in the community or in a hospital from someone else with *Acinetobacter*. It is spread by close contact with an infected person, contaminated hands, or contaminated objects in your surroundings.

Important things to know

Read “Patient Information—Hand Hygiene.”

What are surveillance cultures?

- This test helps us determine whether you are colonized with *Acinetobacter*.
- The test (a groin swab and a throat swab) will be repeated as needed when you are an inpatient or outpatient.
- A medical staff member must perform this test; you cannot perform this test yourself.

What happens if my surveillance culture is positive for *Acinetobacter*?

- If *Acinetobacter* is found, you will be put on enhanced contact isolation to prevent it from spreading to other patients.
- Staff will tell you about the isolation requirements at that time.
- You will be on isolation until the Hospital Epidemiology Service determines that the *Acinetobacter* is no longer present.

How will isolation affect me, my family, and visitors

Read “Patient Information—Enhanced Contact Isolation.”

What will my care providers do differently?

- If you are found to have *Acinetobacter*, you will still receive the same care and treatment when you are on isolation.
- Staff will wear gloves and a gown when they are in the room and caring for you.

How will I get rid of *Acinetobacter*?

- If you have an *Acinetobacter* infection, your doctors will treat it. If you are colonized with *Acinetobacter* it may go away without treatment.
- You can remove *Acinetobacter* from your hands by proper hand washing or by using alcohol hand rub. *Acinetobacter* on objects in your surroundings can be removed by cleaning with a disinfectant.

Be informed. Be empowered. Be prepared.

Questions?

Ask your nurse, doctor, or call the Hospital Epidemiology Service at 301-496-2209.

For more information visit the NIH Clinical Center's Patient Portal:

http://patientportal.cc.nih.gov/pt_care/patient_infection_control.shtml

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Questions about the NIH Clinical Center?

<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>

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