About Klebsiella

*Klebsiella* is a type of gram-negative bacteria that can cause severe infections, such as:

- pneumoniae (lung infection)
- bloodstream infection
- wound infection, and
- meningitis

Where *Klebsiella* bacteria are found

*Klebsiella* bacteria are normally found in the human intestines (where they do not cause disease). They are also found in human stool (feces).

People most at risk for *Klebsiella* infections

In healthcare settings (like hospitals and long-term care facilities), *Klebsiella* infections commonly occur among sick patients who are receiving treatment for other conditions. Patients who have devices like ventilators (breathing machines) or intravenous (vein) catheters, and patients who are taking long courses of certain antibiotics are most at risk for *Klebsiella* infections. Healthy people usually do not get *Klebsiella* infections.

How *Klebsiella* bacteria are spread

To get a *Klebsiella* infection, a person must be exposed to the bacteria. For example, *Klebsiella* must enter the respiratory (breathing) tract to cause pneumoniae, or the blood to cause a bloodstream infection.

In healthcare settings, *Klebsiella* bacteria can be spread through person-to-person contact and from patient-to-patient on the hands of healthcare personnel. The bacteria are not spread through the air.

Patients in healthcare settings 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 may allow *Klebsiella* to enter the body and cause infection.
Preventing *Klebsiella* from spreading

To prevent spreading *Klebsiella* infections between patients, healthcare personnel must follow specific infection control precautions.

These precautions may include wearing gowns and gloves when they enter *Klebsiella* patient rooms and strict adherence to hand hygiene. Healthcare facilities also must follow strict cleaning procedures to prevent the spread of *Klebsiella*.

To prevent the spread of infections, patients also should clean their hands very often, including:

- before preparing or eating food,
- before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth,
- before and after changing wound dressings or bandages,
- after using the restroom,
- after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and
- after touching hospital surfaces such as bed rails, bedside tables, doorknobs, remote controls, or the phone