

# Fact Sheet: *Acinetobacter*

## What is *Acinetobacter*?

*Acinetobacter* is a group of bacteria that is usually found in soil and water. It can also be found on the skin of healthy people, including health care personnel. The most common type is *Acinetobacter baumannii* that causes about 80% of the cases. Outbreaks typically occur in the intensive care units and health care settings with very ill patients. *Acinetobacter* infections rarely occur outside of the health care setting.

## What are the symptoms?

- *Acinetobacter* causes a number of illnesses including pneumonia, blood infections, or wound infections.
- The symptoms vary depending on the illness.
- *Acinetobacter* can also live in a person without causing symptoms, especially in a tracheotomy or open wound.

## How is it spread?

- *Acinetobacter* is spread by person to person contact, contact with contaminated surfaces, and environmental exposure.
- The people most likely to become infected are people with weakened immune systems, chronic lung disease, or diabetes.
- People who are hospitalized for long periods of time, those who are very ill on a ventilator, any person with invasive devices (such as urinary catheter) or those who have open wounds are also at increased risk of an *acinetobacter* infection.

## How is the disease treated?

*Acinetobacter* is often resistant to many common antibiotics. Decisions regarding how to treat the infection are done on a case by case basis by a healthcare professional.

## How is the spread of the infection prevented?

*Acinetobacter* can live on the skin and survive in the environment for several days. It is important to practice good hand washing and environmental cleaning.

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.*

