

VRE

What is VRE?

VRE stands for Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci. VRE is a type of bacteria. Bacteria can cause infections. To treat or kill these infections antibiotics are used. VRE is not killed by common antibiotics like Vancomycin.

VRE is usually found in the intestine or rectal area. This is called the carrier state. VRE may cause a problem for patients in the hospital who have a low resistance to infection.

What are the symptoms of VRE?

When an infection caused by VRE occurs, the symptoms depend on where the infection is. For instance, with a wound infection, it will cause redness around the wound and a discharge from the wound. If the infection is in the urine, it may cause burning when urinating. It may also cause the need to urinate more often.

Can VRE be treated?

Yes, but it is difficult to treat. If an infection occurs you will be given antibiotics. If you have a VRE, but do not have an infection (the carrier state), antiseptic soap may be used.

How is it spread?

It can be spread by touching people who have it or by handling things that they have used. Washing your hands well is the most important thing you can do to stop the spread of VRE.

What happens if I have VRE?

If you have VRE, you will have a room of your own or share a room with another patient who also has VRE. This helps to protect you and prevent the spread of VRE. While in hospital you will be in Contact Precautions.

What are Contact Precautions?

Contact Precautions help reduce the risk of spreading infections to patients, visitors and staff.

- A sign is put on your door to let staff and visitors know that you are in Contact Precautions.
- People entering your room must wear a gown and gloves. Supplies are stored outside your room.
- Everyone helping you with personal care must wear a gown and gloves.
- Before leaving your room, everyone must take off their gown and gloves and wash their hands.
- You have to stay in your room unless you need to go for a test or x-ray. If you need to leave, a staff member will help you get ready. You will need to wear a clean patient gown or clean clothing.
- Do not go to common areas such as the ward kitchen, hospital café or other patient rooms.
- **Wash hands well and often.** Use soap and water or the waterless hand rinse that is placed in your room and outside the doorway.

Can I have visitors?

Yes. Healthy people are not at risk for developing infections with VRE. Visitors must wear a gown and gloves in the room. They must remove the gown and gloves and wash their hands when leaving the room. There will be a sign on the door to let your visitors know what to do. Visitors should not go to common areas such as the lounge without first washing their hands.

What happens when I go home?

You can go home with VRE. Continue to wash your hands well. Good hand washing prevents infections. Your nurse will review any special instructions with you before you go home and provide you with a handout.

What should I do if I need continuing health care?

When any further health care is needed, you should let the health care worker know that you have VRE. You may still carry VRE even though you feel well and it is causing you no harm.

You need to give this information:

- when you go to a doctor
- when you go to a hospital or clinic
- any time you need to give a medical history

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, your physician or health care worker.