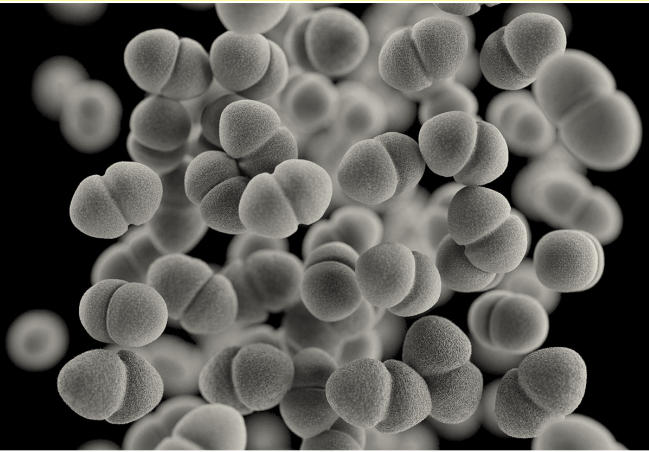


Information for patients

Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus (VRE)



Infection Control

What is Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus (VRE)?

VRE is a type of bacteria (enterococcus) that has developed resistance to many commonly used antibiotics, especially an antibiotic called Vancomycin.

Why is it a problem?

VRE doesn't usually cause infections, but when it does, they are difficult to treat because many of the commonest antibiotics don't work on it.

What is Enterococcus?

Enterococcus is a bacteria that lives in most peoples' bowels. It is undetected and harmless as the body's immune system keeps it under control; this is normal and is called 'colonisation'. It does not normally cause a problem. However, it can cause infections, usually in people who are already sick.

How did I get VRE?

VRE is passed from the bowel. You may have unknowingly touched a contaminated object/surface and then touched your mouth or food. VRE likes moist environments such as bathrooms. It grows most commonly in moist skin folds, such as around the anus and in the rectum.

If I'm in the hospital, why are special precautions needed?

Special precautions are needed in order to prevent the spread of the bacteria to other patients in the hospital.

- You will be nursed in a single room
- You must wash your hands after using the toilet
- Avoid touching open wounds
- It is very important for all staff and visitors to clean their hands when they come in, and when they leave your room
- A Yellow sign border will be placed outside the room. This is to remind everyone about the special precautions needed
- It is important that you do not visit patients in other parts of the ward or hospital

- Children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are particularly vulnerable to catching infections; please make sure all visitors clean their hands when they come into your room and before they leave.

What will happen when I leave hospital?

If you go to another health care facility some extra precautions might be needed. This is to prevent spreading VRE to other patients. Good hand hygiene is very important to reduce the risk of spreading VRE.

What about at home?

VRE is no more dangerous than other normal bacteria that people carry on their skin or in their bowels. The easiest ways to minimise the spread is to make sure the toilet is clean after you have used it and to remind everyone to wash their hands, especially after going to the bathroom.

Further information is available from:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS provide confidential on-the-spot advice and support, helping you to sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide within the NHS.

RJAH PALS Tel: **01691 404606** Email: PALS.Office@rjah.nhs.uk

Other sources of Information

NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Tel: **111** (free from a landline or mobile). Web: www.nhs.uk

Patient UK

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self-help groups and a directory of UK health websites. Web: www.patient.info

Self-Help UK

This is a directory of self-help groups and charities.

Web: www.selfhelp.org.uk

If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet. Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

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