

Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE)

Infection Prevention

What is Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE)?

VRE is a type of bacteria (Enterococci) that has developed resistance to many commonly used antibiotics, especially an antibiotic called Vancomycin. Enterococci are bacteria that live in most peoples' bowels harmlessly as the body's immune system keeps it under control. This is called colonisation and will normally not cause a problem. However it can lead to infections, usually in people who are already vulnerable and unwell. VRE may occasionally be referred to as GRE, which stands for Glycopeptide Resistant Enterococci.

How did I get VRE?

As mentioned above VRE will normally live harmlessly in the bowel, but there is an increased risk of picking up the bacteria if you:

- Have had a prolonged hospital stay
- Have a weakened immune system
- Have had previous prolonged courses of antibiotics
- Have been nursed in an intensive care unit
- Have been in contact with somebody carrying VRE
- Have had contact with contaminated equipment or environments.

How will VRE be treated?

The microbiology team will give expert clinical advice to your medical team on how to treat the specific infection you have and decide upon a relevant course of treatment. If the VRE is found to be living in your bowel harmlessly then no treatment will be required. However precautions will need to be taken to prevent any spread of it to other vulnerable people.

How can the spread of VRE be prevented?

First and foremost the hospital has a strict policy on antibiotic use so as to reduce the number of patients developing VRE. If you have been deemed to have a VRE infection then special measures will be taken to prevent the spread. This will include:

- Ideally being placed in a single room with its own toilet facilities
- Healthcare staff wearing gloves and aprons when caring for you

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

- Healthcare staff ensuring strict hand hygiene is applied before and after your care
- Asking you to ensure you wash your hands thoroughly, especially before and after using the toilet and eating
- Not touching any open wounds or medical devices you may have such as a urinary catheter tube or intravenous drip
- Enhanced cleaning of the hospital environment and equipment.

It is important to note that VRE cannot be spread by coughing or sneezing.

Can I have visitors?

Visitors are allowed, because as long as they are healthy, then VRE poses little risk to them. It is however very important that they wash their hands thoroughly before and after visiting you in hospital. Visitors are not required to wear aprons and gloves. If any visitors are unwell, have weak immune systems or are particularly vulnerable to catching infections they should speak to the nursing team looking after you to see if they should visit.

Will VRE go away?

VRE can survive in your digestive system for a long time without causing you or your household any further problem. If you were to come back into hospital again, visit a GP surgery or attend an outpatient clinic then it is important that you inform the nursing and medical staff that you have had VRE in the past.

Can I go home with VRE?

Carrying VRE will not delay your discharge. Any infection caused by VRE will have been treated appropriately in hospital. Once the medical team deem that you are medically fit you will be able to be discharged home. Once at home, as mentioned before, no special measures will be required by your household. However it is important that you and your household continue with good hand hygiene especially before and after using the toilet and eating.

Where can I find more information?

If you have any more questions concerning VRE then please consult with the healthcare professionals looking after you. They may also contact the specialist infection prevention team for you.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。