

What must I do if VRE is detected?

- **You will** be asked to give a sample of faeces and some swabs will be taken from you to identify the extent of your VRE carriage.
- **If you** are considered a risk to other patients, particularly if you have diarrhoea you will be placed in single room isolation or cohort with other patients in the event of an outbreak and asked to stay in your room until the diarrhoea stops.
- **While in isolation** we will ask you to reduce your visitors to family only, where possible.
- **Do adhere** to good hand washing and general hygiene principles- after using the toilet and before eating your meals and **do remind** your visitors to wash or alcohol gel their hands on entering/leaving your room/area.
- **Gloves and plastic aprons** will be worn by staff and visitors on entering your room.

What will I do when I go home?

Live a normal life but if you are a carrier a practice good hand hygiene after using the toilet/ before preparing food. You are not a risk to your family and even if someone is ill in your home/work place just continue with your hand washing. after using the toilet



- **Do practice** good hand washing – whether you use soap and water or an alcohol gel do include your fingertips, thumbs and wrists.
- **Do remind** your visitors to wash or/ alcohol gel their hands on entering/leaving your room/area.
- **Do remind** your visitors not to sit on your bed.
- **Do not** sit on other patients beds- use the chair provided.
- **Do not** interfere with your dressing, your drain, your urinary catheter, your drip/other.
- **Do inform** a member of staff if you find that the toilet, shower or bathroom needs cleaning.
- **Do inform** a member of hospital staff if toilet paper, soap, or disposable towels need to be replaced.
- **Do not** leave your soap or other personal toiletries lying around.

Infection Control
Mercy University Hospital
Cork.



VRE

Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus



**PATIENT/VISITOR
INFORMATION LEAFLET**

What are Enterococci?

These are bacteria which are normally present in the gut and in the female genitourinary tract and do not cause problems. They are described as part of a person's normal flora. A person may be a carrier of these bacteria and described as being a carrier or colonized without being infectious.

Enterococci may become a source of infection if they travel to the blood stream, to a wound or to the urinary tract. They do not as a general rule cause problems in the healthy individual but infection may occur in those who are very ill in hospital, those whose immune system has been weakened by surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, organ transplant, burns etc.

Where are these organisms found and how do they spread?

Indirect Contact- Enterococci can be found on door handles/knobs, toilets, toilet handles, taps and other surfaces contaminated by a patient who has not washed their hands after using the toilet.

Direct Contact- They can be spread directly on the hands of health care workers to the patient or from one patient to another.

Other means of spread- They can be spread by sharing toiletries- hence the reason that patients are asked not to leave their soap, shaving foam, towel etc. lying around.

Note: Good housekeeping/cleaning is vitally important.

Some Enterococci become resistant to Penicillin.

VANCOMYCIN IS THE ANTIBIOTIC USED TO TREAT THESE INFECTIONS

Q. What is VRE?

A. Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci.

Q. When was the resistance first recognised?

A. It was first recognised in 1986.

Q. What does that mean?

A. It means that some strains of enterococci have become resistant to the antibiotic Vancomycin.

Q Is it possible to carry this bacteria without being infected?

CA. Yes! you may be a carrier or become colonised but not infected.

Can VRE be spread?

- Yes! It is spread in the same way as enterococci (already described).

Who are at risk for VRE?

Those who have been previously treated with Vancomycin are the highest risk.

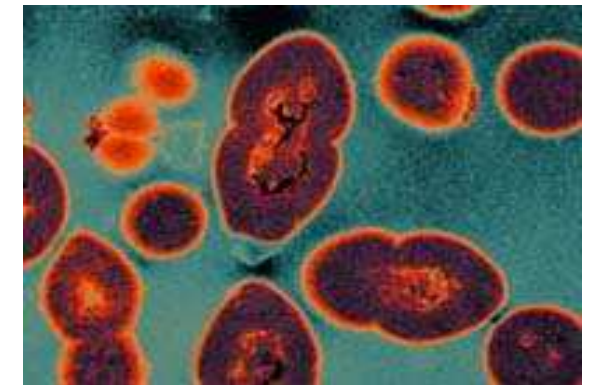
This is caused by enterococci (normal flora) developing their own resistance to Vancomycin.

Who are at risk of infection with VRE?

- Like antibiotic sensitive enterococci VRE is usually only a problem for the very ill, and those whose immune system is suppressed as already described.

Is VRE infection to be feared more than other infections?

- The risk attached to getting a VRE infection is no greater a risk than any other infection. The problem lies with the number of antibiotics it may be resistant to. This can be a problem in treating some of these infections.



VRE as seen in the laboratory