

Can I have visitors?

There are usually no restrictions on visitors but please check with the nursing staff if you or your visitors have any concerns.

Your visitors, including children, must wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub **every** time they leave your room so they do not spread VRE. This is the most important way to prevent the spread of all germs.

Staff may also instruct your visitors to wear gloves and/or gowns/aprons while visiting you.

What about when I go home?

Continuing to clean your hands, especially after going to the toilet is one of the most important ways of preventing infections spreading.

Further questions?

Please ask your doctor or nurse if you have any more questions about VRE.



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POPULATION
HEALTH
SERVICES

Vancomycin Resistant *Enterococci*

Information for patients



Department of Health
and Human Services



What is VRE?

Enterococci are bacteria that live in the bowel without causing any harm. If these bacteria are given the opportunity to spread to other body sites, they may cause an infection.

An infection caused by *enterococci* can be treated with several different antibiotics.

Vancomycin Resistant *Enterococci* (VRE) are *enterococci* that have become resistant to an antibiotic called vancomycin. This means infections caused by VRE can be harder to treat.



Carrying VRE?

You can have VRE in your bowel without knowing or being harmed by it.

Carrying the bacteria without having an infection is called being “colonised” with VRE.

If doctors need to find out if a person is colonised with VRE they do a faecal specimen or anal swab.

Being infected with VRE

Sometimes VRE can cause an infection. This happens when the bacteria enter the body or bloodstream. VRE can cause:

- urinary tract infections
- wound infections after surgery
- bloodstream infections.

To find out if VRE is causing an infection, a doctor or nurse might take specimens from other body sites. Test results will help doctors decide how to treat the infection.

Where did I get VRE?

You may have got VRE before you came into hospital or you may have picked it up in hospital.

How does VRE spread?

The most important way VRE spreads is through direct skin contact and by hands.

For example, if you are colonised with VRE, the bacteria may get on surfaces around you. When someone touches those surfaces, the VRE can get on their hands.

Without hand hygiene, VRE can spread to other surfaces and people.



Will VRE affect my hospital stay?

If you have VRE, it's important for staff to stop it spreading.

They do this by:

- caring for you in a single room
- cleaning their hands after touching you or your surroundings
- wearing gloves and gowns/aprons when they come into your room, and removing them when they leave your room.



It's very important for you to help stop VRE spreading too.

Wash your hands with soap and running water:

- before handling food or drinks
- after going to the toilet
- after handling dirty washing
- when leaving your room.

Follow instructions from your nurse or doctor.