

What is VRE?

- Enterococci are germs that live in the gastrointestinal tract (bowels) of most individuals and generally do not cause harm (this is termed “colonization”).
- Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) are strains of enterococci that are resistant to the antibiotic vancomycin. If a person has an infection caused by VRE it may be more difficult to treat.

How is VRE spread?

- VRE is spread from one person to another by contact, usually on the hands of caregivers, and can be present either from touching contaminated material excreted by an infected person or from touching articles soiled by faeces.
- VRE can survive well on hands and can survive for weeks on inanimate objects such as toilet seats, taps, door handles, bedrails, furniture, and bedpans. However, VRE is easy to kill with the proper use of disinfectants and good hand hygiene.

What infection control precautions are required for VRE?

- It is important that infection control precautions are taken to stop VRE from spreading to other patients in our Hospital. These precautions include:
 - Single room accommodation (the door can remain open).
 - A long-sleeved gown and gloves will be worn by everyone who cares for you.
 - A sign will be placed on your door to remind others who enter your room about the special precautions.
 - The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
 - Everyone who leaves your room must clean their hands well.
 - You must clean your hands before you leave your room.

What about Family/Visitors?

- Your family and loved ones may visit you.
- Visitors should not assist other patients with their personal care, as this may cause the germ to spread.
- They may be required to wear a mask, long-sleeved gown, and gloves while in your room.
- Before leaving your room, visitors must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container and the linen hamper located in your room and then clean their hands.

What will happen at home?

- If you have VRE at the time of your discharge from our Hospital, the following practices are recommended:
 - Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet should wash their hands after contact with you.
 - Wash your hands before you make any food and before you eat. This practice should be followed by everyone in the household.
 - Wash your hands well after using the toilet. Make sure others that use the bathroom wash their hands well afterwards. If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least weekly with a household cleanser.
 - Clothing may be laundered in the usual manner, with the rest of the household laundry.
 - No special cleaning of furniture or items (ex. dishes) in the home is required.
 - Always tell your Physician, Paramedics, Nurses, or other care providers that you have VRE. This helps prevent spread to others and helps your doctor choose the right antibiotics if necessary.

Good Hand Hygiene Practices



Remind all staff and visitors to practice good hand hygiene before and after they touch you.



Ask your Nurse or Doctor to demonstrate proper hand hygiene techniques:

- 15 seconds of soap and running water OR
- alcohol-based hand rub until hands are dry.



You need to clean your hands:

- after using the bathroom,
- after blowing your nose,
- before eating and drinking,
- before and after you touch your dressing or wounds,
- when your hands are visibly dirty (soiled), and
- before you leave your room.

If you have questions or concerns about VRE please contact your primary healthcare provider/Family Doctor.