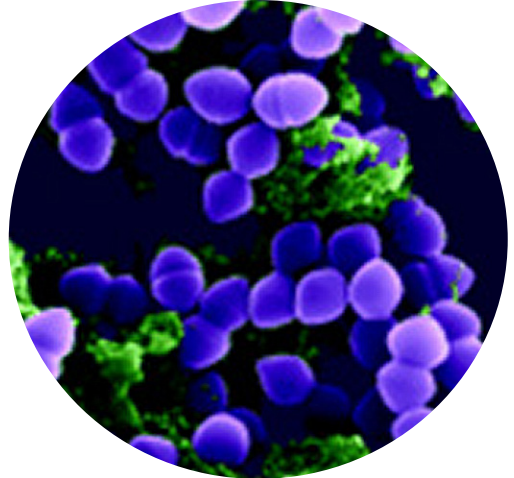


VRE

Information for patients



What is VRE?

VRE stands for Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus (VRE).

Enterococci are bacteria or germs. Bacteria or germs are found on everyone both inside and outside the body. VRE like all germs can live harmlessly on you or in your gut without ever causing any problems, but if they get in the wrong place at the wrong time, they can cause an infection.

VRE are resistant to some antibiotics commonly used to treat infections. This can sometimes make them more difficult to treat.

How will I know if I have VRE?

If staff think you have got an infection, they will take a specimen and send it to the lab. Either a doctor on your ward or a nurse will let you know your results as soon as possible.

How did I get VRE?

VRE may have been in your gut before you came into hospital where it lived happily doing you no harm, or you may have picked it up since you came into hospital.

When you are ill your body defences are normally weakened. Operations and other treatments may make you more sensitive to infection.

What will happen to me?

You may be asked to move into a side room to prevent the possibility of spreading infection to other people. Staff will be wearing gloves and aprons when caring for you, this is also to help stop the infection spreading around the ward.

What about treatment?

Treatment is not always needed, but if your doctor feels that VRE is making you unwell you will be given antibiotics that the bacteria or germ is sensitive to.

Will it affect my visitors?

VRE is not a risk to healthy people. Visitors will be asked not to move around the ward from patient to patient. If they are visiting someone else apart from you, it is better if they see you last.

Visitors will be asked to clean their hands carefully before leaving your room, or if you are nursed with other patients, before leaving the ward by either using soap and water or the alcohol hand rub provided.

How can I help stop the spread of VRE?

It is very important that you clean your hands properly with soap and water particularly after using the toilet and before eating.

If you have difficulty in getting to the sink then you can use hand wipes to clean your hands. Please ask a member of staff if you need help.

Try not to touch wounds, drips, catheters and other tubes. Having separate cloths or single use wipes for different parts of your body when washing will help prevent the bacteria spreading.

If you have a bath or a shower this should be cleaned properly after use. Please tell a member of staff as soon as you have finished.

It is also important that you only use the toilet/commode that has been allocated to you; this is to help stop the infection spreading to other people

Can I still go home if I have VRE?

As soon as your doctor says you are well enough, you can go home. Having VRE should not stop this.

VRE should not affect any aspects of your normal lifestyle, or any activities you are involved in.

If you, your family or friends have any questions, please feel free to discuss this with the ward staff or an Infection Control Nurse.

Infection Control Team 0113 206 6339