

Infection Prevention and Control Department

What is VRE?

VRE is short for vancomycin-resistant enterococci. Enterococci are bacteria that are commonly found in the intestinal tract of most humans and animals. This is quite normal and does not mean that they will make you ill. Vancomycin is an antibiotic that is often used to treat infections caused by enterococci. VRE are bacteria that have become resistant to vancomycin. It means that this type of antibiotic – and some others – cannot be used to fight infections caused by this type of germ.

How is VRE spread?

There are two main ways to contract VRE infections:

- VRE that live harmlessly in a person's bowel but can be transferred to other areas of the body, for example, into wounds.
- Directly from person-to-person on the hands, or indirectly from contaminated equipment that has not been cleaned appropriately.

How do I know if I have VRE?

VRE can be found in laboratory samples such as urine, blood, sputum, wound swabs etc.

How did I get VRE?

The bacteria are most likely to be found in people who have been taking antibiotics or in patients with a weakened immune system, such as those in intensive care units or who have cancer. But sometimes we do not know why you have VRE.

What does colonisation mean?

It means that we have found VRE in your bowels but they are not causing you any harm and you do not have an infection. This means you do not need any treatment.

How do I know if I have a VRE infection?

Symptoms such as a high temperature, pain when you pass urine or redness around your wound may be signs that you have an infection. If you are found to have VRE, you will be informed by the team looking after your care.

How is it treated?

If you have a VRE infection, your doctor will decide which antibiotics to give you. Some VRE infections are difficult to treat because many antibiotics do not work on these bacteria. This may be given intravenously via a catheter (needle) into your vein.

Will having VRE affect my care?

If you are colonised with VRE or have a VRE infection it is important to prevent the bacteria spreading to other patients on the ward. We take the following contact precautions to protect you and other patients:

- All staff looking after you will wear an apron and gloves. Your visitors do not need to wear these unless they are providing care such as helping with washing and dressing or using the toilet.
- Staff and visitors must clean their hands before and after any contact with you. If they do not, ask them to.
- Where possible you will be isolated in a single side room where the door should remain closed. A sign advising staff of the necessary precautions will be placed on the door; the sign does not give information about the reason for isolation.
- Although VRE does not cause diarrhoea, having diarrhoea increases the risk of spreading the bacteria. Please inform a nurse or doctor if you have diarrhoea.

Things to remember

- Do not visit the ward day room.
- Do not go to another patient's bed area.
- You can have only two visitors at a time.

How can my visitors help prevent the spread of VRE?

Please ask your visitors to use alcohol gel to clean their hands when entering and leaving the ward. In addition, they should be asked to wash hands with soap and water before and after direct contact with you and before leaving your room.

Do I need to take any special precautions once I have left hospital?

No special precautions are required, you should ensure good hand hygiene after using the toilet.

Do I need to tell anyone that I have been colonised with VRE or have had a VRE infection?

- Inform nurses or doctors whenever you are admitted to hospital or when you are seen in an out-patient clinic.
- Inform your G.P. and any other health professional you visit in the community or who visit you at home.

Will I always have VRE?

You may still have VRE in your bowel, along with other 'good' bacteria, even after completing any treatment you receive; this is known as colonisation and does not need treatment. Over a period of time many people become clear spontaneously.

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact our Infection Control Team.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Infection Control Nurse

Calderdale Royal Hospital
01422 222376

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
01484 342447

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੂਰ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"