

**Here are some tips that you can use to limit the risk to others:**

- Do not touch open wounds on your body. If you must change a bandage make sure you wash your hands before and after.
- Do not share towels or care items like toothbrushes, washcloths, or razors.
- Anyone who cares for you should wash their hands when they are done.
- Your clothes can be washed in the same manner as everyone else in the household.
- No special cleaning of items in your home is needed, like tables, counters, or dishes. VRE and many other germs are easily killed by common household cleaners.
- The fact that you have had VRE is private. It is your choice to share this information with your friends and family.
- Always tell you doctor or nurse that you have had VRE so that they can take extra precautions. This will help them choose the right drug if you get sick with an infection.

**How long will I have VRE?**

Once you have had VRE the chances that you will have it again are very high. When VRE lives in your gut it becomes normal for you. Sometimes your test results will show VRE and sometimes they won't. But knowing that you have had VRE will help your doctor get you the right drug faster if you do get an infection.

If you are not sick with an infection then you do not need to be treated. We will continue using gowns and gloves when you come to the hospital.

**COMPASSION is our  
PASSION**

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**VRE  
(Vancomycin  
Resistant  
Enterococci)**

**Patient  
Information  
Pamphlet**



OUTSTANDING CARE – NO EXCEPTIONS!

## What is VRE?

Enterococci are germs that live in the gut, or rectal area of healthy people. It can cause an infection if it gets into places where it is not normally found, like through a cut in your skin or into your urinary tract. Some types of Enterococci have become resistant to the drugs that are most often used to treat infections. This is called Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci or VRE.

If your normal body defenses have become weak then you are more likely to have VRE living in your gut. This will not make you sick and does not need to be treated. Many people have VRE and don't know about it. If VRE starts to cause an infection then it does need treatment.

Many patients in hospital get tested to see if they have VRE. A swab of the rectal area or stool is used for testing. A stool sample gives the best results. This testing helps staff to know what types of extra precautions they need to take.

## How is VRE spread?

VRE is spread from one person to another by touching. This could be from touching a person who has VRE living in their gut or items in their room. Hands are the most common way VRE gets around.

## Who is at risk of having VRE?

### If you have ever had any of the following you are at risk of having VRE:

- Have had VRE in the past
- Spent time in a hospital or nursing home
- Spent time in a hospital in another country
- Spent time in a room or lived with someone who had VRE
- Your body's defenses are weak due to medicine or illness like cancer or kidney disease
- Recently been on drugs to fight an infection.

## What happens when I am in the hospital?

All staff working in the hospital are trained in ways to stop the spread of germs and this includes VRE. The most important way to stop the spread of germs is by keeping our hands clean. Soap and water or alcohol rub may be used to clean hands. You will be able to find sinks and alcohol rub all over the hospital.

## This is what to expect if you have VRE:

- You will be placed in a room by yourself or with someone who has had VRE before.
- Staff will use extra items when they care for you. A gown will be worn when they enter your room or bed space. This stops staff from picking up VRE on their clothing. Gloves will be used at times to stop the spread of germs on their hands.
- A sign will be placed on your door to remind others to wear a gown and gloves.

- An alert will be placed in your hospital record. This reminds us about the extra precautions we may need to take each time we see you.
- Everyone who leaves your room must clean their hands well.
- You must clean your hands before you leave your room and may be asked to put on a clean hospital gown.
- You do not ever need to wear gloves. This makes it hard to clean your hands at the right times.
- Your family and friends will need to wear a gown. They only need to wear gloves if they are going to care for you, like take you to the toilet or give you medicine.

## What should I do at home?

Having VRE should not change your day to day life at home. The chance of spreading VRE to your healthy family and friends is low as long as you practice good hygiene.

Wash your hands when they are dirty, before and after eating or drinking, and after using the toilet or blowing your nose. Make sure your family and friends clean their hands too.