



Patient Education Sheet

What is VRE?

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VRE is an abbreviation for Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococcus, a type of infection caused by the enterococcus bacteria. This bacteria lives in the intestines and in the female genital tract. Sometimes it causes an infection. Enterococcus infections are often treated with an antibiotic called Vancomycin.

Some enterococcus bacteria are no longer killed by Vancomycin, and are then called Vancomycin-Resistant. These bacteria are often resistant to other antibiotics as well.

Most VRE infections are treated with other antibiotics. Your physician may order laboratory tests to determine which antibiotic will work best for your infection.



How is VRE spread?

VRE can be passed from person to person. It can also be passed from a person's hands to other types of surfaces, such as bedrails, table-tops, and medical equipment.

Are some people more at risk than others to get VRE?

Some people who are more at risk to become infected with VRE include:

- Those who have been previously treated with Vancomycin or other antibiotics for long periods of time
- Those who have been hospitalized and receive antibiotics for long periods of time
- Those with weakened immune systems, such as patients with cancer, or who have had transplants or are critically ill in intensive care
- Those with intravenous catheters or urinary catheters that stay in for some time
- Those who have undergone surgical procedures, such as abdominal or chest surgery

How is the staff at the hospital preventing the spread of VRE?

To prevent the spread of VRE infections, your physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers:

- ✓ Clean their hands with soap and water or with the alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after caring for every patient
- ✓ Thoroughly clean hospital rooms and medical equipment
- ✓ Use Contact Precautions when caring for patients with VRE infections. Contact Precautions mean:
 - Patients with VRE infections will be put in private rooms or will share a room with another patient who also has VRE
 - The healthcare providers will put on gowns over clothing and gloves before entering the patient rooms
 - Visitors will be asked to put on gowns and gloves
 - When leaving the room, the gowns and gloves are removed and discarded. Hands are to be cleaned
 - Patients on Contact Precautions are asked to stay in their hospital rooms as much as possible and not to go to common areas, such as the lounge or kitchen areas (They may go to treatment and

test areas of the hospital as necessary)

If you do not see your physician, nurse, or any other healthcare provider wash his/her hands, please ask them to do so.

If I have a VRE infection, is there anything special I need to do when I go home?

The following are helpful tips to prevent the spread of a VRE infection:

- ✓ **Clean your hands often**, especially before and after using the bathroom or before preparing food. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- ✓ **Take all of the antibiotics prescribed** by your physician. Do not skip doses, take half doses, or stop the medication before the medication course is finished.
- ✓ **Those who live with you should clean their hands often**, especially before and after helping you with your care.
- ✓ **Tell all of your healthcare providers** that you have VRE. This includes healthcare providers during subsequent trips to the hospital, trips to the physician offices, home health agency staff, and therapists.

Source:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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