Infection Prevention and Control Department

What is VRE?

VRE is short for vancomycin-resistant enterococci. Enterococci are bacteria that are commonly found in 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 the laboratory from urine, blood, or from a swab.

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 any symptoms. 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.

compassionate 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. So we take the following contact precautions to protect you and other patients:

- All staff looking after you will wear gloves and an apron.
- Staff and visitors, must clean their hands before and after any contact with you. If they do not, ask them to.
- We may move you to a single room on your own and take special precautions. A sign will be placed on the isolation door and it will be kept closed; staff must put on gloves and aprons before coming into your room; and visitors must only wear gloves if they are helping with your personal care such as washing or turning you. You can also help us by telling your nurse if you have diarrhoea. Although VRE does not cause it, the bacteria may be spread more easily 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 all your visitors to wash their hands using soap and water when they come onto and leave the ward. When they are by your bed, they should use the alcohol gel provided when they arrive and leave.

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

No. VRE is not likely to harm healthy people outside hospital, including babies and pregnant women.

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

You must tell the nurses and doctors caring for you if you have – or have had – VRE:

- When you are admitted to hospital.
- Before an outpatient appointment or a visit to your GP or any health care professional, by showing your VRE alert card.

Will I always have VRE?

You may still have them in your bowel along with other 'good' bacteria after you have completed treatment: and is often known as colonisation, but they are unlikely to cause any problems; and need no special treatment with antibiotics or antiseptics. Over a period of time many of these people become spontaneously clear

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 www. danych kontaktowych

ਵ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪਾਰੂਪ 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
براۓ 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"