



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE)

Issued by Infection Control

What is VRE?

VRE stands for Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci which is a type of bacterium or germ that is commonly found within the human bowel. It can also be found in urine or wounds. In the majority of cases the bacterium is harmless, this may be referred to as colonisation. VRE is a type of Enterococci that has become resistant to Vancomycin (an antibiotic) which may be used to treat various infections. You may not be aware of any specific symptoms of VRE.

How did I get VRE?

Some patients are more susceptible to getting VRE, for example:

- those who have been in hospital for a long time
- those who have been taking antibiotics for a long time
- those who have had a medical device in place i.e. urinary catheter
- those whose immune systems are compromised

How is VRE identified?

VRE can be identified in a variety of investigations including urine specimens, swabs or blood. The infection prevention and control team will be informed of the positive result and this will then be communicated with the ward team and yourself.

Result explained

A positive result means you have the bacteria in your body but does not always mean that you are infected.

How is VRE treated?

If you are identified as having a VRE infection, specific antibiotics will be given, after discussion with the microbiology team.

How can the spread of VRE be prevented?

If you have a VRE infection or colonisation it is important you are nursed in a single room. This is to reduce any further risks to yourself and others around you. Good hand hygiene should be performed by yourself and everyone you have contact with. Your visitors may be asked to wear an apron and gloves if they are assisting you with personal care.

VRE is most commonly spread via hands, equipment and sometimes the environment. It is important that healthcare workers and visitors maintain a high standard of hand hygiene.

What happens when I go home?

Nothing specific needs to change, all we ask is that you try and maintain a good standard of hand and personal hygiene. You can also ensure that you drink at least 6-8 glasses of fluid (not alcohol) to promote general well-being.

Should I inform anyone I have had a positive VRE result?

Your GP will be notified of your result however should you have contact with any other healthcare provider you should inform them.

Where can I find more information?

For further information please speak to a member of staff and information may also be found on the Public Health England website.

Contact us

If you would like to discuss this information leaflet please call 0344 811 8111 and ask to speak with the Infection Prevention and Control team.

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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