

## What will happen when you're discharged from hospital?

If your healthcare team has told you that you have VRE, here are some recommendations for when you are home:

- Always tell your doctor, paramedics, nurses or other care providers that you have VRE. This helps stop it from spreading to other patients.
- Anyone helping you with personal care or using the bathroom should wash their hands afterward.
- Make sure **you** wash your hands before you prepare food or eat.
- If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least once a week with a disinfectant cleaner.
- There are no special instructions for handling trash or laundry.



## CLEAN YOUR HANDS



### Hand Sanitizers

- Squirt alcohol-based hand rub on your palm.
- Continue to rub your hands and fingers for 15 seconds until the gel is dry.



### Soap and Water

- Use warm running water and soap.
- Wet hands with water.
- Lather and rub hands together for at least 15 seconds, paying attention to fingertips, cuticles, around rings, and under nails.
- Rinse thoroughly.
- Pat dry.
- Turn off taps with towel.
- To prevent dry cracked skin, apply hand lotion several times per day.



This brochure provides basic general information only and is not a complete resource on VRE. If you have questions, please ask your doctor, nurse, or local health unit.

## Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococcus (VRE)

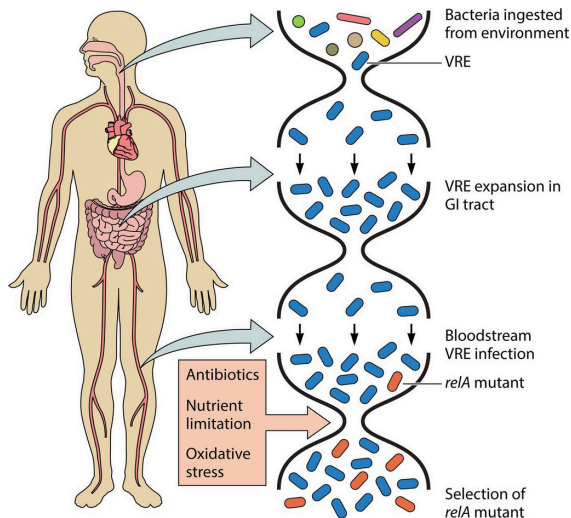


## Patient Education

## What is Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococcus (VRE)?

Vancomycin is an antibiotic used to treat infections, including those caused by most types of Enterococcus. Enterococci are bacteria normally found in the gut or stomach. Over time, using too many antibiotics has caused these bacteria to change and become resistant to Vancomycin. When this happens, Vancomycin can't kill the bacteria anymore, and it's called VRE.

VRE can live on hard surfaces for many days and on hands for several hours. You can prevent it by cleaning with hand sanitizer or washing with soap and water.



## Who is at risk?

Those at highest risk for VRE include:

- People who have been sick
- People who have taken many antibiotics
- People with weakened immune systems due to illness or age

## Can it be spread?

VRE is contagious. Infection spreads by:

- Touching someone with VRE and not washing your hands afterward.
- Picking up the bacteria from surfaces and then touching someone else without cleaning your hands.
- Sharing objects between patients without cleaning them in between uses.

## Colonization vs. Infection

VRE can live in the large bowel without causing disease. This is called colonization and usually doesn't need treatment.

Under the right conditions, this same bacteria can sometimes cause infections in urine, the chest, surgical wounds, and the blood. If an infection does occur, there are other medications that can be used to treat it.

## What can you expect in hospital?

- A Contact Precautions sign will be placed outside your room.
- All staff, visitors and family members will wear gowns and gloves to protect themselves.
- Everyone coming into your room must clean their hands when they enter and leave.
- You should only use the bathroom in your room.
- You might be moved to another room if a private one is available or share a room with someone who has the same bacteria.
- We will ask you to clean your hands if you are leaving your room for a test.
- A Contact Precautions transport sign will be put on your wheelchair or stretcher as a reminder for staff.
- When you are admitted to hospital in the future, you will be placed on Contact Precautions.

## What about family & visitors?

- You can have visitors, but we ask them to help reduce the spread of the bacteria by wearing gloves and a gown, and **washing their hands**.
- When they leave your room, they must take off their gown and gloves, even if they are coming back.
- Visitors should not touch anyone or anything in your room unless they have first washed their hands.
- Visitors must not use your bathroom or eat/drink in your room.