



Vancomycin-
resistant
enterococcus
(*VRE*)

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Vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (*VRE*)

WHAT IS VANCOMYCIN-RESISTANT ENTEROCOCCUS (VRE)?

ENTEROCOCCUS are germs that are found in the gastrointestinal tract (or bowels) of most individuals. Generally, these germs do not cause any harm.

Vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (VRE) are types of germs that no longer respond to treatment with the antibiotic Vancomycin, making those with VRE more difficult to treat.

HOW IS VRE SPREAD?

In a healthcare setting, VRE can be spread from patient to patient or from patient to healthcare provider via:

- Bacteria carried on the hands.
- Contaminated equipment.
- Infected surfaces such as toilet seats, bedrails, door handles, soiled linens, etc.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR CONTRACTING VRE?

VRE infections occur mostly in healthcare settings among patients with weakened immune systems.

Patients who have been previously treated with Vancomycin or other antibiotics for long periods of time, have undergone surgical procedures and/or require medical devices, such as urinary catheters, are at a higher risk of contracting VRE.

PREVENTING SPREAD OF VRE

Preventing the spread of VRE at a hospital can be done by:

- Placing patients with VRE in single-room accommodation, if possible.
- Posting precautionary signs outside the room of a patient who has VRE.
- Wearing protective gowns and gloves when caring for or visiting a patient with VRE.
- Practicing proper hand hygiene by using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) before entering and upon exiting a patient's room.

PATIENTS DISCHARGED WITH VRE

If patients have VRE at the time of discharge from a hospital, no special cleaning of clothes or linens is required. Articles can be laundered as usual with the rest of the household laundry.

BE OPEN ABOUT VRE

Always tell your physician and other care providers if you have VRE in order to prevent spreading it to others.

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO CLEAN YOUR HANDS

- After using the toilet.
- After sneezing, coughing or blowing nose.
- Before preparing meals and eating.
- Before and after touching or dressing wounds.
- Before entering and upon exiting a patient's room.