



## How can I contact a member of the Infection Prevention & Control Team?

Tell the Clinical Nurse Manager or nurse looking after you if you would like to speak to a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team and they will contact us.

Additional information can be found at :  
<http://intranet.tuh.ie/departments/IPC/Pages/home.aspx>

We have made every possible effort to make sure that all the information provided in this leaflet is true, accurate, complete and up to date at the time of publication.

### Version 8

Reference :

[www.hse.ie/infectioncontrol](http://www.hse.ie/infectioncontrol)

**Health Protection Surveillance Centre)**

[www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)

MPINFEC001-05



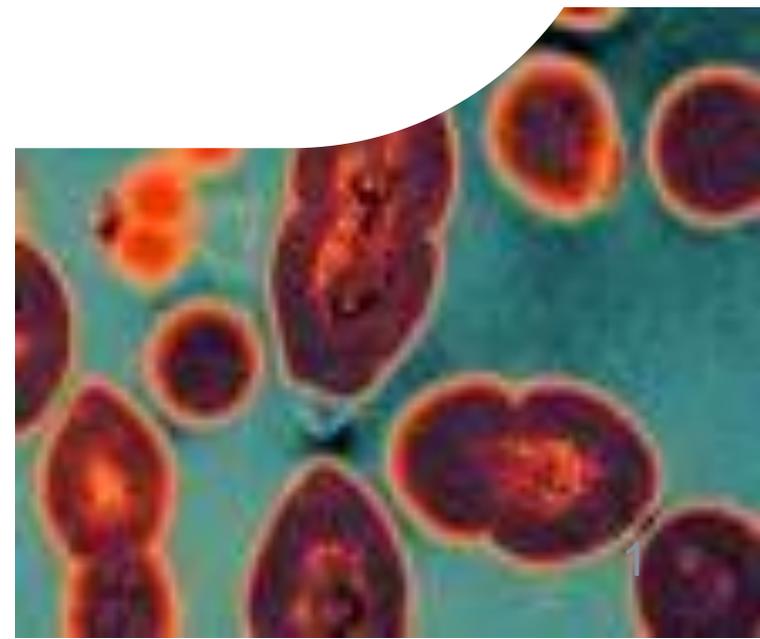
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PATIENT  
INFORMATION  
LEAFLET

## VRE (Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus)



## Instructions for Visitors

Please clean your hands before and after visiting. Please do not use patients' bathrooms or sit on beds. Do not visit other patients or areas of the hospital.

## What can I do to help?

It is very important to tell your nurse or doctor when you are admitted if you have a history of VRE. Remember hand washing or using alcohol gel limits the spread of infection.

If a patient has VRE we may share that information with other hospitals. The Patient should also inform their carers of the result on admission to another hospital. This will help to stop the spread of VRE.



## What is Vancomycin

### Resistant Enterococci (VRE)?

*Enterococci* are bacteria that are part of the normal flora of human gastrointestinal and genital tracts and normally do not cause disease. Vancomycin is an antibiotic that is often used to treat infections caused by *enterococci*. In instances where *enterococci* have become resistant to this drug they are called vancomycin – resistant enterococci (VRE).

VRE can live harmlessly in the bowel for most people however, VRE can cause infections of the urinary tract, bloodstream or wounds.

### How can VRE be spread?

VRE can be spread between patients through direct contact with each other or by touching items or surfaces that the person with VRE may have touched, such as rails, toilets or equipment. As patients in hospital are much more vulnerable to infection than patients in their own homes, special precautions are required to prevent the spread of VRE between patients in Hospital.

### How can you tell that I have VRE?

Samples requested by your doctor such as wound or stool specimens are sent to the Microbiology Laboratory for testing and the report will be sent back to your doctor

### What treatment will I need?

Your doctor will decide what treatment you require if you are found to have VRE. If you have an infection your doctor may advise antibiotic therapy.

## Do I have to stay in hospital longer ?

Most patients who have VRE can be discharged from hospital. If you have an infection you may have to stay in hospital until you have finished your antibiotics and are feeling better.

## Can my family and friends visit me while I'm in hospital?

All visitors should clean their hands before and after they visit you. Visitors do not need to wear aprons and gloves. If your visitor has a long term health condition they should speak to a member of the nursing staff before visiting you.

## Will I get rid of VRE?

Your body may clear VRE from the bowel but it may remain in the bowel for some time. Taking antibiotics can encourage growth of VRE. Antibiotics can treat VRE infection but it will not clear VRE from the bowel.

## Are there any risks to my family at home?

It is always very important to wash your hands carefully after using the toilet and before preparing meals or eating. Clean hands protect you and others from lots of infections, not just VRE. Contact with family and friends who are healthy poses no risk. Bed linen and personal clothing should be washed and changed as normal.

## How can VRE be prevented from spreading in the hospital?

The Infection Prevention & Control Nurse will notify the ward manager or nurse in charge if VRE has been diagnosed by the Laboratory.

You may be moved to a single room with en-suite facilities for infection control precautions. A blue sign will be placed on your door. If VRE is isolated in a wound swab a urine sample taken from a urinary catheter or if you have diarrhoea, you may be cared for in an isolation room. VRE does not cause diarrhoea but as it lives in the bowel, it may be spread more easily if you are suffering with diarrhoea.

Healthcare workers looking after you will be wearing aprons/gown and gloves on entering your room. The healthcare worker will remove these items and clean their hands before leaving the room.

