



In this document the term patient is inclusive of patient, resident and client.

## **What is Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE)?**

Enterococci are bacteria that live in the gut of people, usually without causing harm. However, they can sometimes cause infections, like urinary tract or blood infections. These bacteria can become resistant to the antibiotic vancomycin, making the infection harder to treat.

## **How do you get VRE?**

VRE can spread on contaminated hands and hard surfaces such as countertops, toilets, and bedrails. The bacteria can live on hard surfaces for days or even weeks.

## **Can VRE be treated?**

If you carry VRE but do not have symptoms, you are considered 'colonized' and do not need to be treated. If you get an infection, your doctor will work with you to choose the right treatment. If you are prescribed an antibiotic, it is very important to finish your full course of the antibiotic, even if you start feeling better.

## **What happens in the hospital if I have VRE?**

If you have VRE, extra safety measures will be taken when you are a patient on certain hospital units, such as the critical or intensive care unit, transplant unit, or oncology unit.

- A sign will be placed on your door, and people will need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) like a gown and gloves, when entering your room.
- You should stay in your room unless it's necessary to leave for medical reasons like a medical test or procedure.

## **Is it safe for people to visit me if I have VRE?**

Yes, family and friends can visit you. We ask that they clean their hands before and after visiting. If you are in the critical or intensive care unit, transplant unit, or oncology unit and they will be helping you with care like feeding, bathing, or using the bathroom, they should wear the PPE listed on the sign.

## **What should I do at home to prevent VRE from spreading?**

There are simple things you can do at home to stop VRE from spreading:

- Clean your hands regularly. This is the best way to stop germs from spreading.
- Do not share personal items like towels, clothing, bar soap, or razors.
- Clean your home often, especially the kitchen and bathroom, with a household disinfectant.
- Wash your clothes using regular laundry soap and in the normal wash cycle.
- Cover any draining wounds with a clean, dry dressing.
- Tell your healthcare providers that you have VRE so they can prevent the spread to others and choose the right antibiotics, if needed. Always take antibiotics exactly as prescribed.

