

This leaflet gives general advice. For further information please ask either the nursing or medical staff who are providing your care and treatment or contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team on 01386 502552.

If you would like this leaflet in a different language, larger print size, in audio, Braille or any other format please contact the

PALS team by phone on

☎ 01905 760020;

by letter ✉ Communications,  
Worcestershire Health and Care Trust,  
2 Kings Court, Charles Hasting Way,  
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Worcestershire  
Health and Care  
NHS Trust



**VANCOMYCIN RESISTANT**  
**ENTEROCOCCUS (VRE)**

***What is it?***

***Your questions answered***

**An Information Leaflet  
for  
Patients and Staff**

You are reading this leaflet because you have been told that you have or have been in contact with a germ (bacteria) called VRE. Vancomycin is an antibiotic which is often used to treat infections caused by enterococcus, however it is not effective against these bacteria.

### **WHAT IS THIS GERM?**

This is a germ which is found in the gut, and is resistant to a range of commonly used antibiotics. Usually it does not cause infection, but lives harmlessly in the bowel or elsewhere in the body. However occasionally it may cause infection which may be more difficult to treat with the antibiotics usually used. This germ is most likely to be found in people who have been taking antibiotics or patients who have a weakened immune system.

### **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT IN HOSPITAL?**

As VRE is resistant to many of the antibiotics we use in hospital, we need to try to contain it and stop it spreading. So if we find you have VRE (usually by testing your stool) we will care for you in a single room and put in place precautions.

### **WILL IT AFFECT MY HEALTH?**

Most usually VRE will not cause you any ill effects. The detection of this germ in your gut when it is not causing you any problems is called colonization. Colonization means you do not need any treatment, but it is important that we know if you have VRE so that if you do become ill, we will know which antibiotic to use.

### **CAN VRE BE CLEARED WITH ANYTHING?**

There is no treatment which is able to clear VRE from the gut and you may continue to have them along with other 'good' bacteria, when they are unlikely to cause any problems. However, it may disappear from other areas after treatment for infection. The unnecessary use of antibiotics can cause other germs to also become resistant to treatment.

### **WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN TO TEST ME?**

You may have been routinely screened for this germ, either because of an underlying medical condition, or because of the increased risk of coming into contact with it as a result of clinical care.

### **DO I NEED TO TELL POPELE ABOUT IT?**

There is generally no need for you to tell friends and family that you have VRE. We will tell you GP when you are discharged from hospital, and your hospital notes will be marked with an alert. However, if you are re-admitted or seen in out-patients please tell staff that they should contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team to let us know.

### **ARE MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT RISK?**

No, healthy people are not at risk. If there is anyone at home who is very unwell, perhaps undergoing chemotherapy for cancer or kidney dialysis, please contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team for advice.