

Additional information

The Infection Prevention Team are always available to offer advice or information to patients, staff or visitors on Infection Prevention matters.

If you would like further information about your infection, please ask your named nurse to contact one of the Infection Prevention Team who will be happy to help you.

If, after reading this leaflet you have any further questions, please contact your doctor or discharge ward on:

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600



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Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE)

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

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What are Enterococci?

Enterococci are bacteria found in the faeces of most humans and many animals. These organisms usually just live in the bowel and cause no harm whatsoever. Occasionally they may cause infection e.g. urinary tract infection and wound infection.

How are Enterococcal infections spread?

Most can be treated with common antibiotics. Serious infections may require treatment with the antibiotic Vancomycin. Until 1986 we could always guarantee that enterococci were sensitive to Vancomycin.

What are VRE?

VRE stands for Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus. These organisms may only colonise the body i.e. just live on the body without causing any harm or infection. However, if they cause an infection, they will not respond to Vancomycin.

Treatment of VRE

People who are only colonised with the organism do not require specific antibiotic treatment. Those who are infected can be treated with an antibiotic called Linezolid. This does not eradicate the organism completely, it just cures the infection. The organism will continue to colonise. Therefore precautions will still need to be taken to prevent spread of infection, even after the treatment course has been completed.

Preventing the spread of infection

People with VRE do not look or feel different from other people. The bacteria can only be identified in the laboratory on swabs taken from your wound etc.

It is important to prevent the spread of VRE so that the number of these difficult-to-treat infections is limited.

There are 4 ways we can do this:

- By making sure patients do not receive antibiotics unnecessarily e.g. for colds or flu. Unnecessary use of antibiotics causes problem organisms like VRE to arise.
- By taking special precautions when patients with VRE are in hospital. This means that the patient has a single room. Staff coming into contact with the patient will wear gloves (to keep their hands clean) and plastic aprons (to stop the organisms getting onto their uniforms). They will also wash their hands when they leave the room.
- By making sure that medical equipment is cleaned thoroughly between patients.
- By making sure that the hospital environment is kept clean.

Why do I have to stay in single side room?

You need to stay in a single room to prevent VRE being passed onto other patients who may be poorly or have little resistance to infection.

What about my visitors?

You can have visitors as usual. They must wash their hands with soap and water before and after visiting time.

Your visitors will not be ill even if they pick up VRE, as long as they are healthy. If you have any doubts, please discuss this with the nursing staff.

Discharge from hospital

VRE is not a risk to otherwise healthy people. Therefore no specific precautions need to be taken once you are discharged home. If you are re-admitted to hospital, tell the nursing staff that you have VRE. They will ensure that you are given a single room so that no vulnerable patients on the ward are put at risk of a potentially serious infection.