



VRE

Vancomycin-resistant enterococcus

What is it?

- Enterococci are bacteria that live in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract of most individuals
- Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) are strains of Enterococci that are resistant to the antibiotic vancomycin
- Infections such as urinary tract infections or bloodstream infections caused by VRE may be more difficult to treat
- VRE can live in or on individuals without causing illness (this is the majority of cases)

How is it spread?

- From one person to another by contact, usually on the transiently colonized hands of health care workers
- Indirectly from contact with contaminated environmental surfaces and patient care equipment

Where is it found?

- VRE can be found in the bowel, female genital tract, skin, oropharynx and/or bile
- May survive in the environment for up to 7 days on hands, gloves, equipment and environmental surfaces such as bedrails, door handles, toilet seats, furniture, telephones, stethoscopes, rectal thermometers and bedpans

Prevention and control

- Use contact precautions (in addition to routine practices) when caring for someone with VRE
- Provide a private room with dedicated toileting facilities for colonized/infected individuals
- Clean hands well and often with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Wear gloves and gown when entering a patient room in acute care or for direct care of residents in long-term care (must be discarded before leaving the room)
- Dedicate patient/resident equipment or clean and disinfect equipment after patient/resident use for shared equipment
- Clean and disinfect all high touch and horizontal surfaces in the room daily (stringent protocols required)
- Inform the receiving department and staff involved about transport of the infection control precautions in use
- Ensure appropriate terminal cleaning of the room after discharge
- Discontinue precautions only at the direction of the infection prevention and control team