

What can I do to help?

In order to help prevent the spread of VRE into the environment, please wash your hands especially after using the toilet.

You can ask the staff looking after you to wash their hands or use alcohol hand rub and wear an apron and gloves before giving you any care.

What will happen when I go home?

At home, you will need to ensure you practise good hand washing.

If you are admitted to another hospital please let the staff looking after you know you have had a positive VRE result.

Also let your GP know.

How can I get more information?

The Infection Prevention and Control nurses visit each ward at least once per day; ask your nurse to contact us.

Alternatively you can telephone the Infection Prevention and Control Team in the hospital on 4433 1181.

Contact details

Infection Prevention and Control

Townsville University Hospital
100 Angus Smith Drive
Douglas QLD 4814

Phone: (07) 4433 1181

Townsville Hospital and Health Service
100 Angus Smith Drive, Douglas QLD 4810

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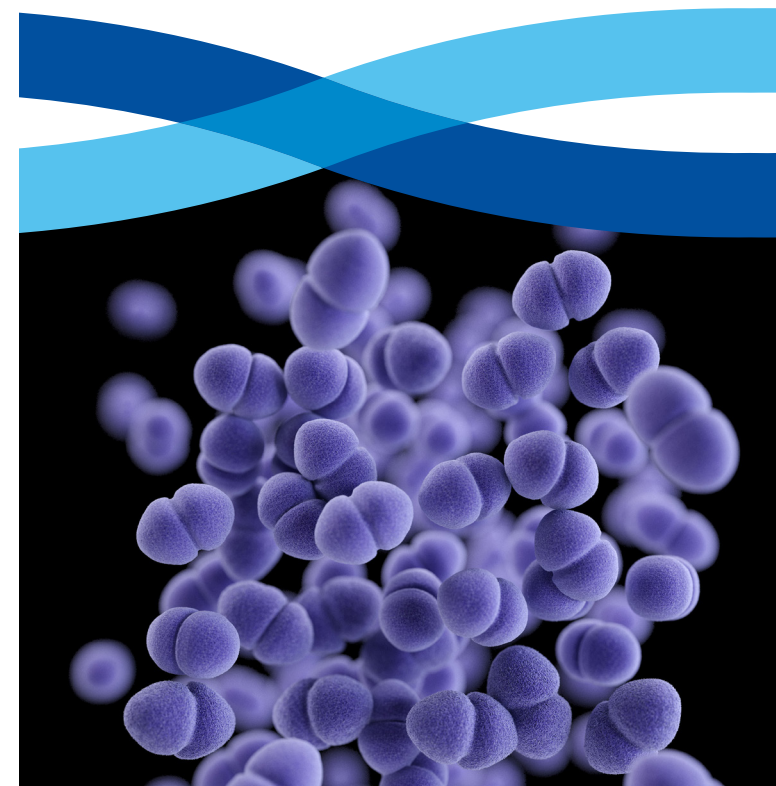


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VRE

Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus

A guide for patients and visitors of the
Townsville Hospital and Health Service



What is Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus (VRE)?

Enterococcus are bacteria we all carry, usually in our bowel.

In recent years enterococcus have developed resistance to an antibiotic called vancomycin which was commonly used to treat it.

These bacteria are called vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE).

What can VRE cause?

VRE can be carried on the skin and may cause no problems. In some cases though the bacteria cause infections in wounds, urine and blood (bacteraemia).

How is VRE treated?

If you are a carrier of VRE you will not need any treatment but you need to be cared for in a way that prevents transmission of VRE to other patients.

If you have a VRE infection it can be difficult to treat and may mean longer periods in hospital and treatment with a variety of antibiotics.

Who is at risk of infection?

People who are already ill or have an impaired immune system and have been admitted to hospital are more susceptible to infection.

How does VRE spread?

It is spread by direct physical contact with a person with a VRE infection or their surroundings. This includes touching sheets, dressings, bedding and hospital equipment.

It is often spread by hands and that is why hand hygiene is so important.

It is OK for you to ask staff if they have washed their hands prior to touching you.



What will this mean for my hospital care?

All patients who have a positive result for VRE are managed with special precautions to prevent the spread to other patients.

Ideally, you will be nursed in single room and the staff will wear an apron and gloves to care for you.

An alert sign will be placed outside your door to inform all staff of the precautions required before giving you care.

If you need to move outside your room, please wash your hands. Avoid visiting other patients in hospital.

Your visitors only need to wash their hands before visiting you and when they leave unless they are visiting other patients in the hospital. In that case they should also wear an apron and gloves when visiting you.

VRE does not usually pose a threat to healthy people, hospital staff or family members or your close contacts.