



Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus

INFORMATION BROCHURE

What about when I go home from hospital?

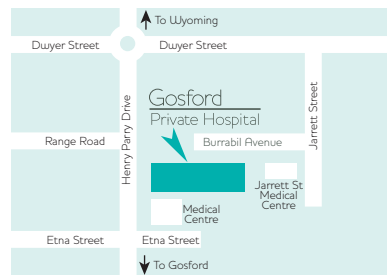
If you are having visits from a home nurse or other health care workers, they may need to take some extra precautions to protect other patients in their care.

Good hand hygiene practices (especially after going to the toilet) will be important when you are discharged. Otherwise no extra precautions need to be taken.

Next time you go to hospital, it is important to tell your nurse or doctor that you have previously had VRE.

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Helping to prevent the spread of infection

Gosford Private Hospital

a member of the [healthcare group](http://healthcaregroup.com.au)



Hand Hygiene is the most important step in preventing the spread of a VRE infection.

What is Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus

Enterococci (Enter-oh-cock-i) are generally harmless bacteria (germs) found in the bowel (gut) of many people and animals. This harmless co-existence is called **colonisation**.

Like any other bacteria (germ), in or on our body, Enterococci may sometimes find their way into other parts of the body where they don't belong – for example, the bladder – and there they can cause an infection.

Vancomycin is an antibiotic sometimes used in hospitals to treat serious infections. Some Enterococci bacteria (germs) have now become **resistant** to Vancomycin. This means the antibiotic can not kill them.

These are known as **Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci** or **VRE**.

However if you have **VRE**, it does not necessarily mean you have an infection, you may simply be colonised.

How do you get VRE?

Some people can develop VRE due to changes in their bowel (gut) bacteria after taking certain types of antibiotics. VRE can also spread from person to person, via contaminated hands or contact with surfaces/equipment contaminated with VRE. The VRE germ is invisible and can be swallowed after hand to mouth contact.

Who is at risk of infection with VRE?

Patients who have:

- Weakened immune systems – e.g. patients in intensive care units, receiving cancer treatment or in transplant wards.
- Undergone surgical procedures involving the abdomen or chest.
- Spent a long time in hospital or been treated with long term antibiotics including vancomycin.
- Long term urinary catheters or intravenous lines into their bloodstreams

What if I get a VRE infection?

We can treat patients who have infections caused by VRE with specialised antibiotics, as determined by pathology testing.

How can we stop the spread of VRE?

Hand Hygiene is the most important step in preventing the spread of VRE infection. To clean hands, an alcohol hand rub or soap and water can be used. It is important for staff, patients and visitors to clean their hands every time they enter or leave a patient room or area.

Please feel free to remind your doctor, nurse or other health care workers about hand hygiene.

Cleaning medical equipment between patient use and keeping the hospital clean is very important.

Single rooms and Contact Precautions provide an extra physical barrier between patients, which is why you have been given your own room. Staff will be wearing gloves and long sleeved gowns when providing personal care to you. Your visitors may also be instructed to wear gloves and long sleeved gowns whilst visiting you.

Are my family and friends at risk?

No. People in good health are not at risk from VRE. Normal contact including kissing is fine.

