

What is VRE?

Vancomycin is an important antibiotic that is frequently used to treat bacterial infections, such as enterococci. Sometimes, these bacteria may become resistant to Vancomycin. These bacteria are called Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE). When enterococci become resistant to Vancomycin, treatment options may be significantly limited.

VRE can live in the intestines and the female genital tract without causing infection (often called colonization). However, it can cause infections of the urinary tract, bloodstream, wounds, catheter sites and surgical sites.

People are at an increased risk of becoming infected with VRE if they:

- Have previously been treated with Vancomycin.
- Have been on other antibiotics for long periods of time.
- Have weakened immune systems.
- Have undergone surgical procedures.
- Have medical devices that stay in for some time (urinary catheters or central intravenous catheters).
- Are colonized with VRE.

VRE is often passed from person-to-person by the contaminated hands of caregivers. It can also be spread after people touch surfaces that are contaminated with VRE.

For more information, visit the following websites:

CDC Multidrug Resistant Organism Management

www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/mdro/index.html

Recommendations for Preventing Vancomycin Resistance

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00039349.htm

CDC Long-Term Care Infection Control

www.cdc.gov/longtermcare/prevention/index.html

APIC/SHEA Guideline-Infection Control in Long Term Care

[www.apic.org/Resource/_TinyMceFileManager/Practice_Guidance/id APIC-SHEA_GuidelineforICinLTCFs.pdf](http://www.apic.org/Resource/_TinyMceFileManager/Practice_Guidance/id_APIC-SHEA_GuidelineforICinLTCFs.pdf)

Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC)

www.cdc.gov/hicpac

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)

www.apic.org

North Dakota Department of Health

www.ndhealth.gov/disease/hai/

Prevention tips and care
for the resident with

Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE)



 **NORTH DAKOTA**
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

Division of Disease Control
2635 E. Main Avenue, P.O. Box 5520
Bismarck, N.D. 58506-5520
Telephone: 701.328.2378

Important Things to Remember

- VRE can live outside of the body on items such as bathroom fixtures, wheelchairs and bedding, depending on the environment.
- Gowns and gloves should be used by health care providers and visitors when providing direct care to a VRE-infected resident and when handling laundry.
- Environmental cleaning is of vital importance. Use an EPA-registered, hospital grade disinfectant with claims against VRE.
- Washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is a must.
- **HAND HYGIENE IS THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE!**



Precautions - Stop the Spread!

Residents with VRE should have their own dedicated equipment, such as wheelchairs, walkers, blood pressure cuffs, whole blood glucose testing devices, etc.



Visitors and health care providers should wear disposable gloves and a gown when providing direct care to a VRE-infected resident.

Hand washing should occur:

- Immediately after using the bathroom.
- Before and after all resident contact.
- Before and after contact with items in the resident's room.
- Immediately after removing gloves.

Ambulatory residents who are not alert and oriented should be in a private room when possible. Otherwise, they should be placed with a resident who has the same organism, who is not immunocompromised, or who does not have any wounds or indwelling devices.

Residents can attend activities and meals if

- their infected wound is dry and covered,
- they are afebrile, and
- any incontinence can be contained.

VRE-infected residents should only use their dedicated bathroom. Residents should perform hand hygiene prior to leaving their room to attend activities and before all meals.

Treatment

People colonized with VRE do not need treatment. Most VRE infections should be treated with antibiotics other than vancomycin.

For people with VRE infections in their bladder and who have urinary catheters, removal of an unneeded catheter can help get rid of the infection. If the catheter is needed, follow your physician's recommendations.

Prescribed antibiotics should always be taken as directed and until completed.



Environmental Cleaning

VRE often is passed from person-to-person by the contaminated hands of residents, caregivers, and visitors. VRE can also be spread directly to people after they touch surfaces that are contaminated with VRE, such as bedding, towels, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.

Environmental cleaning is of vital importance to keep residents, health care providers and visitors healthy. This includes the resident's room and bathroom, as well as equipment.

Laundry from infected residents should be handled using standard precautions, followed by hand hygiene.