

# VRE

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## What is it?

- VRE stands for **V**ancomycin **R**esistant **E**nterococci.
- It is a type of germ or bacteria.
- VRE can also live in or on a person without causing symptoms. This is called the carrier state.
- Sometimes VRE can cause an infection. Infections can occur in wounds, the bloodstream or the urinary tract.
- VRE is not harmful to healthy people. Some of the reasons that put a person at risk of getting VRE include:
  - poor nutrition
  - being elderly
  - poor hygiene
  - frequent use of antibiotics
  - frequent admissions to the hospital
  - having open wounds

## How is it spread?

- It is spread from one person to another, usually on the hands of caregivers. It can be spread by touching people who have it or by handling things that they have used.
- VRE is not spread through the air by coughing or sneezing.

## Is there treatment for it?

- If you have an infection with VRE, there are some antibiotics that can be used. VRE germs are not killed by common antibiotics because some have become resistant and no longer work.
- If you have VRE but are not sick from it (carrier state), you do not need to be treated.
- VRE may go away on its own.

## What can be done to prevent the spread of it?

- Cleaning your hands with a hand sanitizer or soap and water is the best way to stop the spread of VRE.
- If you are in the hospital, you may need Contact Precautions (isolation) and will need follow up laboratory testing.
- Always remember to tell your doctor, nurses, dentist, paramedics or other care providers that you may have VRE.

## For more information visit:

Public Health Ontario

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/v/2016/vre-patients-visitors.pdf?la=en>

**Adherence to Infection Prevention and Control measures by staff and visitors is required to prevent the spread of infection.**

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.  
Clean your hands.**



This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask Infection Prevention & Control or your health care provider.