

Information on VRE exposure

It has been determined that you have been exposed to VRE bacteria. VRE exposure refers to a situation in which someone has been treated at the same ward as a patient with VRE.

VRE belongs to a type of bacteria called Enterococcus. Enterococcus is part of a person's normal intestinal bacterial flora. VRE (Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococcus) is resistant to the antibiotics commonly used to treat enterococcal infections.

Enterococcus, including the VRE strain, has low disease-causing potential and rarely results in symptomatic infection. Enterococcus causes symptomatic infection only when immunity has been considerably compromised by another illness.

Every effort is being made to prevent VRE from spreading in hospitals because the spread of drug-resistant bacteria would make it more difficult to treat infections.

Outside hospitals, exposure to VRE is not harmful.

VRE is transmitted from person to person by contact. Close attention to hand hygiene is the most important means of preventing it from spreading. In addition, samples are collected from people who have been exposed to VRE in order to check that they have not acquired it. People who have been treated in a hospital abroad during the past year are checked as well.

Fortunately, only a very small portion of people exposed to VRE acquire it, so most samples turn out to be negative.

We think it is important for you to have VRE samples taken at an outpatient clinic appointment or at your next hospital visit so that we can make sure you have not acquired VRE. In certain situations, it is important to rule out VRE even before you are hospitalized. These situations include planned surgery and childbirth, for example. The samples can also be taken at your local health center in these cases.

Samples are taken from stool. The sampling is painless and is done at no extra cost to you. The results will be shared with you at your next outpatient clinic appointment or hospital admission.

We hope you agree with the infection control procedures at our hospital, and we apologize for any additional inconvenience caused.