

# Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus (VRE)

## Information Sheet for Patients & Visitors



### VRE Explained:

Enterococci are bacteria that live in the gastrointestinal tract (bowels) of most individuals and generally do not cause harm (this is called "colonization"). Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) are strains of enterococci that are resistant to the antibiotic vancomycin. If a person has an infection caused by VRE it may be more difficult to treat.

### How VRE Is Spread:

VRE is spread from one person to another by contact, usually on the hands of caregivers. VRE can survive well on hands and can survive for weeks on objects such as toilet seats, taps, door handles, bedrails, furniture and bedpans. VRE is easy to kill with disinfectants and good hand hygiene.

### Special Precautions for VRE:

Precautions are taken to stop VRE from spreading to other patients in the hospital including:

- Special accommodations may be required for infection control purposes.
- A long-sleeved gown and gloves may be worn by everyone who cares for you.
- A door sign may be placed to your room to remind others about the special precautions.
- The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Everyone must clean their hands before entering and leaving your room.

### Family & Visitors Protocols While at St. Mary's:

Your family and visitors will be required to clean their hands with hand sanitizer and wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves while in your room. Before leaving your room, visitors must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container and/or the laundry hamper located in your room and clean their hand with hand sanitizer. These precautions will help prevent further transmission.

### After You Leave St. Mary's:

- Everyone who might help you with your personal care should practice good hand hygiene.
- Everyone should wash hands before making any food and before eating.
- Everyone should wash hands well after using the toilet.
- Clothing may be laundered in the usual manner along with the rest of the household laundry.
- No special cleaning of furniture or items (e.g., dishes) in the home is required.
- If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least weekly with a household cleanser.
- Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses, or other care providers that you have VRE. This helps prevent spread to others.

### Good Hand Hygiene Practices:

- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose
- Before eating and drinking
- Before you leave your room
- Before and after you touch your dressing or wounds
- When your hands are visibly dirty



#### Reference:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/a/2013/aros-screening-testing-surveillance.pdf>

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Annex A – Screening, testing and surveillance for antibiotic-resistant organisms (AROs). Annexed to: Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2013