

What is Royal Surrey County Hospital (RSCH) doing about GRE / VRE?

Infection prevention and control is taken very seriously and there are many guidelines and procedures in place to minimise the risks of acquiring an infection or its spread. Like other healthcare organisations the RSCH has to report all blood poisoning caused by GRE / VRE to the Department of Health.

If you require any further information please speak to the nurse in charge.

Key reference source and for further information

- www.gov.uk/topic/health-protection/infectious-diseases

Contact details

The Infection Control Team

Royal Surrey County Hospital
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Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 4580

Royal Surrey County Hospital (RSCH) NHS Foundation Trust fully subscribes to the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) *Being Open* best practice framework, November 2010.

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located right as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–4.00pm
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Future review: March 2019

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Patient information leaflet

Glycopeptide Resistant Enterococci (GRE/VRE)



Infection Control Department

What is GRE?

GRE stands for Glycopeptide resistant enterococci. Enterococci are bacteria (germs) that are commonly found in the bowels (gut) of most humans. There are many different species of enterococci but only a few have the potential to cause infections in humans.

Glycopeptide resistant enterococci are enterococci that are resistant to the group of antibiotics known as glycopeptides. These include vancomycin and teicoplanin. GRE are sometimes referred to as VRE – which stands for vancomycin resistant enterococci.

How is GRE / VRE spread?

There are two main ways to contract GRE / VRE infections:

- GRE / VRE which live harmlessly in a person's bowel and are transferred to other areas of the body e.g. wounds.
- Directly from person to person on the hands, or indirectly from contaminated equipment that has not been cleaned properly.

What infections do GRE / VRE cause?

GRE can cause wound infections and blood poisoning. However, it can also cause infections of the bile duct or urinary tract.

Are some people more at risk than others?

The main risk factors for GRE / VRE infections are:

- Prolonged hospital stay
- Antibiotic treatment
- Intensive care treatment

Is a GRE / VRE infection treatable?

GRE / VRE are not particularly virulent bacteria but they are more difficult to treat as there are fewer antibiotics available.

What happens when a patient is found to have GRE / VRE infection?

Patients diagnosed with a GRE / VRE infection may be transferred to a single room to minimise the risk of spread to other patients on the ward. People in hospital have a greater risk of infection because of illness, surgery and invasive devices e.g. urinary catheters and drips.

Ensure you wash your hands after using the toilet and before you eat. Try not to touch any wounds, catheters or drips.

Healthcare professionals will also take other precautions to prevent spread to other patients. For example, they may use disposable gloves and aprons.

What about my visitors?

- Your friends and family can still come and visit but they must clean their hands before and after visiting. The alcohol sanitising form is sufficient although if they prefer they can wash their hands with soap and water.
- Your visitors do not need to wear any protective clothing e.g. gloves and aprons.
- Please do not let your visitors sit or lie on your bed.
- Visitors should also use the public toilets and not the one in your room.
- If your visitors are visiting other patients in the hospital it is advisable that they visit them before visiting you.

How long do patients with GRE / VRE have to remain in a single room?

Isolation will continue until the infection has cleared. This will vary from patient to patient.

When can I go home?

- You will be discharged home when your general condition allows. This may be before your infection is totally cleared; however, this is not a risk to your family or friends.
- Normal personal hygiene (baths / shower) is sufficient as is normal household cleaning.
- Clothes should be laundered as normal.