

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

Infection prevention and control is taken very seriously at the RSCH. There are many guidelines and procedures in place to minimise the risks of acquiring an infection.

We also monitor any increase in resistant organisms in our wards and departments and check that correct infection prevention and control practices are followed.

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

Key reference source and for further information

- www.gov.uk/guidance/enterococcus-species-and-glycopeptide-resistant-enterococci-gre

Contact details

Infection Control Team

Royal Surrey County Hospital
Egerton Road, Guildford GU2 7XX

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 4580

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 on the right hand side 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–3.00pm
Monday to Friday

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

Past review date: March 2019

Future review date: March 2022

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PIN190319–1025



Glycopeptide Resistant *Enterococci* (GRE/VRE)

Infection Control Department



Patient information leaflet

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.

GRE are bacteria 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 spread?

GRE which live harmlessly in a person's bowel can be transferred to other areas of the body e.g. wounds.

They can be spread in two ways:

- Directly from person to person on the hands
- Indirectly from contaminated equipment that has not been cleaned properly

What infections do GRE 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 infections are:

- Prolonged hospital stay
- Antibiotic treatment
- Intensive care treatment

Is a GRE infection treatable?

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

How can the spread of GRE be controlled/reduced?

You may be moved to a single room for the duration of your hospital stay. This is to reduce the risk to other patients on the ward. People in hospital are at greater risk of infection because of illness, surgery and invasive devices e.g. urinary catheters and drips.

Ensure you wash and dry your hands after using the toilet and before you eat. Avoid touching any drips, drains and catheters etc.

Clinical staff will also take extra precautions to prevent the spread to other patients. For example they may use disposable gloves and aprons. Hand hygiene for everyone is also vitally important.

What about my visitors?

Your friends and family can still visit.

- Your visitors must clean their hands before and after visiting. Alcohol sanitising foam is effective. However, they can wash their hands with soap and water if preferred.
- Your visitors do not need to wear any protective clothing e.g. gloves and aprons.
- Your visitors must not sit or lie on your bed.
- Your visitors must not use the toilet in your room. Public facilities are available at main reception.

Will it affect my discharge from hospital?

No, as soon as you are well enough you can be discharged

What happens when I go home?

- GRE is not a problem for people who are healthy and there are no restrictions on you or your family. You can socialise and resume your normal activities
- Normal personal hygiene (baths / shower) is encouraged.
- Normal household cleaning is adequate
- Clothes should be laundered as normal
- Whenever you attend a hospital or see another healthcare practitioner (including your GP and Dentist), you should inform them that you have had a GRE