

## Patient Records

The fact that you have had GRE will be recorded on your electronic patient record.

### How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser as hand sanitisers are not suitable for use when dealing with patients who have symptoms of diarrhoea.

For infection prevention & control purposes and to keep you safe and well visitors are requested **not** to:

- Visit you if they are unwell
- Sit on your bed or use the patient toilets.
- Touch your wounds, or any medical devices, drips or catheters.

### How can I find out more?

Contact the Infection Prevention & Control Department on:

Wycombe Hospital Tel: 01494 425456

Stoke Mandeville Hospital Tel: 01296 315337

Public Health England Tel: 0344 225 3861

Public Health England Website: <http://www.phe.org.uk>

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[www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk)

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# Glycopeptide Resistant Enterococci (GRE)

## Patient Information Leaflet

If you require a translation or alternative format of this leaflet please call Infection Prevention & Control 01296 315337

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

## What are GRE?

GRE stands for Glycopeptide Resistant Enterococci. GRE's may also be referred to as VRE (Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci). They were first detected in the UK in 1986. Enterococci are bacteria normally found in the bowel of healthy individuals. Sometimes these bacteria become resistant to a group of antibiotics called glycopeptides (Vancomycin, Teicoplanin). GRE can be acquired both in the home, residential homes, your local community and in hospital.

## What illnesses are caused by GRE?

GRE may exist in your body but not cause any harm. This is called colonisation and often persists for months and sometimes for years. The most frequent site of colonisation is the large bowel. Other sites that can become colonised include the throat, skin and vagina. GRE can cause the following infections:

- wound infections;
- bacteraemia (blood poisoning);
- urinary tract infections;
- infections of the abdomen and pelvis.

## How do I know I have GRE?

GRE are detected in the microbiology laboratory following various tests on swabs sent specifically for GRE screening. We do not routinely take swabs for all patients however, you will be screened if you are admitted to Intensive Care Unit or other high risk areas.

## Am I at risk?

You may be at risk of developing infection caused by GRE if you:

- have had specific antibiotic therapy with cephalosporins glycopeptides
- have had a prolonged stay in hospital,
- have been admitted to intensive care or renal units.
- are immuno-compromised (e.g. receiving chemotherapy, high dose steroids).

## How is GRE spread?

- GRE can be spread by Transmission between patients and healthcare workers can be via contaminated hands, equipment and sometimes the environment.

- The GRE bacteria that you normally have in your gut spreads to other areas of the body where it is not normally found.

## Can it be treated?

If required your doctor will discuss this with you.

## What happens after diagnosis?

If you are having diarrhoea and to prevent the spread of GRE, you may be nursed in a single room. Staff will wear gloves and aprons when providing you with care. Hands must be washed with soap and water or disinfected with hand sanitiser before entering or leaving your room. In some circumstances it may be possible to nurse you in an open bay.

## Will GRE affect the treatment of my original condition?

Your treatment in hospital will carry on as usual. You can go for any tests, physiotherapy and occupational therapy that you may need in other departments.

## Are my visitors at risk of GRE?

No. GRE does not normally affect healthy individuals. Your visitors must wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser before entering and leaving your room. If they are visiting other patients in the hospital, they are advised to visit you last to help prevent the spread of GRE.

## Will GRE delay my discharge home?

No, it will not. If you are fit for discharge you will be discharged from hospital. You will be able to carry on with life as normal. Your GP will be notified by the hospital doctors.

## Can I do anything to get rid of GRE?

GRE may go away on its own. However, it does tend to persist in your bowel for long periods. There are no treatments that will specifically clear it from your bowel.