

What is GRE? (Glycopeptide Resistant Enterococci)

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GRE stands for Glycopeptide Resistant *Enterococci*. *Enterococci* are bacteria that live in the gut of most healthy people. GRE are a less common type of the same bacteria. They have become resistant to a particular group of antibiotics called Glycopeptides (including Vancomycin), and may also be resistant to other commonly used antibiotics.

How did I get it?

There are a number of ways that GRE can be acquired:

- You may have acquired it naturally. There is evidence that GRE can be passed to humans via the food we eat. In the Netherlands 5 – 10% of healthy people are thought to have acquired GRE in this way.
- You may have previously had Glycopeptide antibiotics. Use of Glycopeptides and other antibiotics can sometimes cause GRE to develop.
- It can be transmitted to very vulnerable patients in hospital by direct or indirect contact with another patient.

How will GRE affect me?

The vast majority of patients with GRE carry it in or on their bodies without any problems. *Enterococci* do not often cause serious infections, but can cause problems, especially in patients with problems that affect their immunity. If an infection caused by GRE has been identified, your Doctors will prescribe you specific antibiotic treatment for this

Will I be isolated?

It is likely that you will be cared for in a single room. The staff looking after you will wear gloves and aprons for any procedures and significant contact. This is to reduce the risk of staff spreading GRE to other vulnerable or sick patients. However, you may mobilise out of your room, preferably off the ward if your condition allows. If you wish to use the ward's bathroom or shower-room please just let your nurse know.

Is there any risk to my visitors?

GRE does not pose a risk to your visitors, including children or pregnant women. Patients in hospital who are seriously ill or especially vulnerable to infection can however be affected. If any of your visitors are seeing other patients, it is a good idea that they visit you last. We encourage all visitors to routinely use an alcohol gel on their hands or wash hands with soap and water after visiting any patient in isolation.

Will I always carry GRE?

This will depend on where we have found the bacteria. If it is in the gut it may remain there for months or even years. In some cases GRE tests may be negative after treatment.

What happens when I go home?

As the general population is not at risk from GRE infection, there is no need for any special precautions. If you are readmitted to hospital please tell staff you have had GRE. You may need to be cared for in a single room again, and further specimens may be required to see if you are still carrying it.

Laundry

Clothing can be washing in a normal domestic washing machine. Use the hottest wash appropriate for the type of clothing. You do not need to segregate your washing from that of other family members.

If more information on GRE is required please contact one of the Infection Control Nurses on (01392) 402355.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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