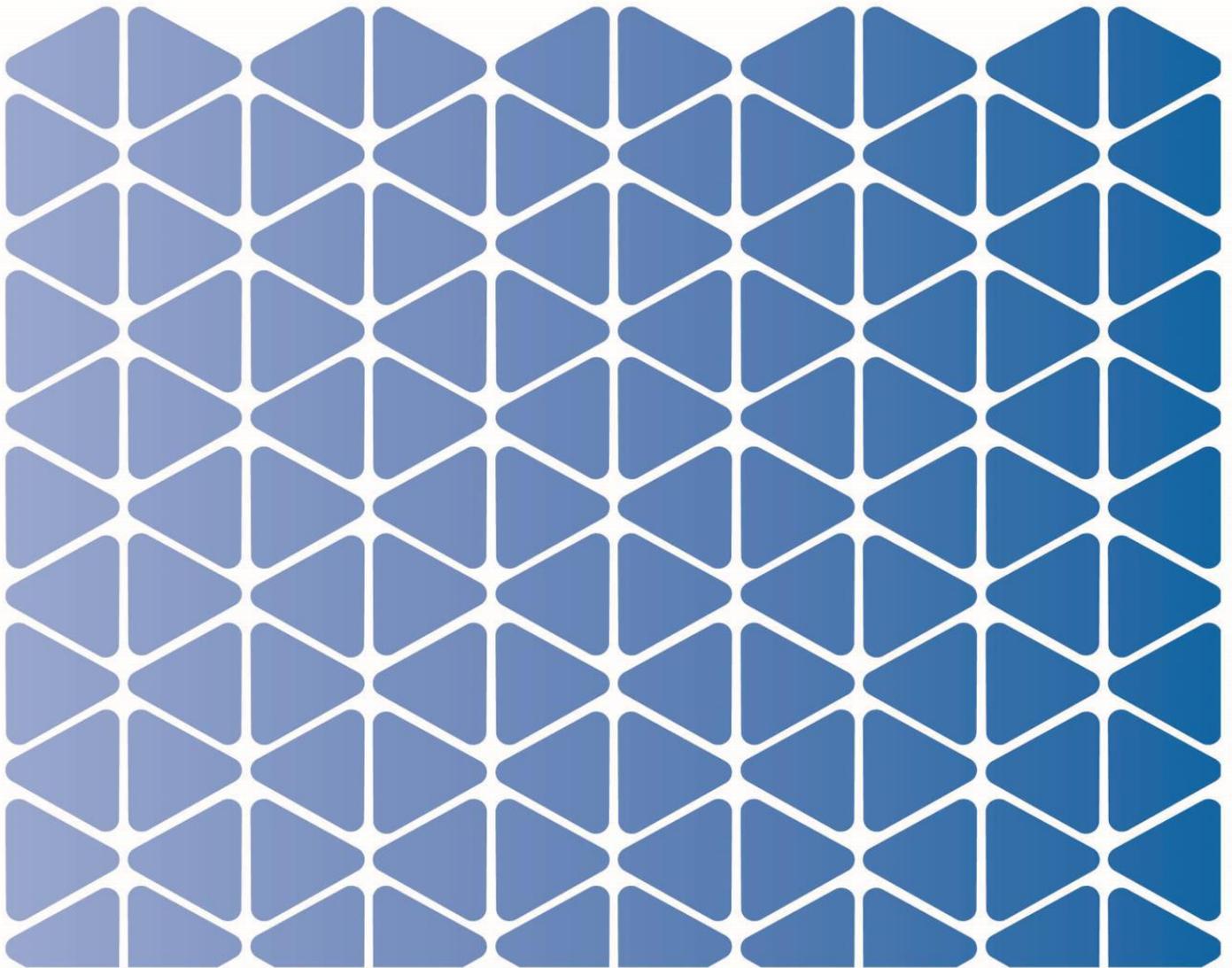




PATIENT INFORMATION

# VRE (VANCOMYCIN RESISTANT ENTEROCOCCI)



You are reading this leaflet because you have been told that you have a bacteria called VRE.

## **WHAT IS VRE?**

VRE stands for vancomycin-resistant enterococci. Enterococci are bacteria that usually do not cause infection, living harmlessly in the bowel or elsewhere in the body, this is known as colonisation. VRE are bacteria that are resistant to a range of antibiotics, making it difficult to treat when it causes infection.

## **WHY DOES VANCOMYCIN RESISTANCE MATTER?**

Medical staff in hospitals rely on vancomycin to successfully treat certain infections; VRE is resistant to this antibiotic. Therefore, in hospitals, where there are many vulnerable patients, it is important to prevent the spread of resistant bacteria such as CPE.

## **WILL IT AFFECT MY HEALTH AND DOES IT NEED TO BE TREATED?**

It does not usually cause you any ill-effects, however, it is important that we know about it so that if you get ill, we will know which antibiotic to use. If you are colonised with VRE then you do not need to be treated as the unnecessary use of antibiotics can cause bacteria to become more resistant. However, if the bacteria have caused an infection, then special antibiotics will be required.

## **HOW WOULD I KNOW IF I AM COLONISED WITH VRE?**

Sometimes we need to screen patients for VRE; occasions include routine testing of patients on our intensive care units (ICUs) VRE, or if you have been identified as a contact of a patient who is also known to be colonised with VRE. Alternatively, we may have found VRE incidentally while testing you for something else.

## **HOW DID I BECOME COLONISED WITH VRE?**

As mentioned above, sometimes these bacteria can be found, living harmlessly, in the gut of humans and so it can be difficult to say when or where you became colonised. However, there is an increased chance of becoming colonised with these bacteria if you have had a prolonged hospital stay, been nursed in an intensive care unit (ICU), have had a previous prolonged course of antibiotics, or have been in contact with someone known to also be colonised with VRE.

## **HOW CAN THE SPREAD OF VRE BE PREVENTED?**

VRE is spread directly by person to person contact and by contact with contaminated surfaces. Accommodating you in a single room helps to prevent the spread of the bacteria. Healthcare workers should wash their hands regularly. They will use gloves and aprons when caring for you. The most important measure for you to take is to wash your hands well with soap and water, especially after using the toilet. You should avoid touching medical devices (if you have any) such as your urinary catheter tube

and your intravenous drip, particularly at the point where it is inserted into the body or skin. Visitors will be asked to wash their hands on entering and leaving the room and asked to wear an apron.

**DO I NEED TO TELL PEOPLE ABOUT IT?**

There is no need for you to tell anyone. We will tell your GP when you are discharged, and your hospital notes will be marked with an alert. If you are re-admitted, tell the ward staff who can then arrange for you to be admitted to a single room if possible.

**ARE MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT RISK?**

No, healthy people are not at risk. If there is anyone at home who is very unwell, perhaps undergoing chemotherapy for cancer or dialysis, please inform the staff on the ward.

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999 via the main hospital switchboard for advice.**

### **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

### **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net)**

### **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.