



# Vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE)

## Description

Enterococci are bacteria that are normally found in the intestines, in feces or on the genitals. These bacteria may sometimes cause different infections (e.g. urinary, wound or blood infections)

VRE are enterococci that have developed a resistance to many types of antibiotics including vancomycin. VRE do not cause any more infections than other types of enterococci. Treatment may, however, be more difficult and longer.

Screening allows the detection of people who are carriers of the bacteria and, thereby, take the necessary precautions to reduce the risk of transmission. Following a laboratory analysed sample, we refer to a user:

- **Colonised:** A person with an identified VRE (e.g. rectal) **without** any signs of infections.
- **Infected:** A person with an identified VRE (e.g. urine, wound) **with** signs of infections.

The duration of colonisation of VRE is undetermined but may last several months.

## Transmission Mode

Transmission occurs primarily by healthcare and services providers through direct contact with a carrier (colonised or infected) or their contaminated surroundings.

The main risk factor for contracting VRE is spending time in a healthcare setting.

Admitted or housed residents are more likely to contract this type of bacteria because:

- Their immune system is weakened
- They are taking antibiotics
- They are receiving invasive care

## Treatment

A user colonised by VRE does not require any particular treatment since he has not developed an infection. A healthy person can sometimes eliminated VRE without any treatment.

However, a user infected by VRE may need an antibiotic treatment. Since VRE are resistant to many classes of antibiotics, treatment will be determined by the doctor.





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### Infection prevention and control measures

#### At home

For healthy individuals, these bacteria do not pose a threat. There are no particular measures to be taken when the carrier returns home, as much for the dishes as for the laundry.

The most effective and easiest way to avoid transmission is frequent hand washing from the carrier as well as from family members.

#### Episode of care and services

Hand hygiene remains the most effective measure as much for the healthcare and services provider as for the user and visitors. Other measures may be put in place, such as, wearing personal protective equipment and disinfection of the surroundings.

### Notice

These informations don't supplant the opinion of a health professional. If you have any question regarding your health condition, consult a healthcare professional or call Info-Santé at 811.