

Glycopeptide Resistant Enterococci (GRE)



Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet gives patients and their family information about Glycopeptide Resistant Enterococci. This is a bacteria that can be found during the testing of specimens such as urine, blood or wound swabs.

What are Enterococci?

Enterococci are bacteria that are commonly found in the bowel of normal healthy people.

There are many different species of enterococci, but only a few have the potential to cause infections in humans. They can cause a range of illnesses including urinary tract infections, bacteraemia (blood stream infections) and wound infections.

Glycopeptide-Resistant Enterococci (GRE) are enterococci that are resistant to a group of antibiotics called Glycopeptides such as vancomycin and teicoplanin.

What does a GRE result mean for me?

For most patients, GRE lives harmlessly in the bowel and does not cause infection. This is called 'colonisation'.

It can be difficult to treat GRE infection because many of the commonly used antibiotics will not work. Doctors will choose the antibiotic that will be most effective in treating the infection. However, if there are no signs of infection and you are simply 'carrying' the bacteria, no treatment is required.

How do people get GRE?

The bacteria can be found living harmlessly in the bowel and so it can be difficult to say when or where you picked it up.

It can spread through direct contact or by touching items or surfaces that the person with GRE may have touched.

Are some people more at risk than others?

Infections caused by GRE mainly occur in hospital patients, particularly those who:

- are immuno-compromised (have lowered immune systems)
- have had previous treatment with certain antibiotics
- are on a prolonged hospital stay
- are in specialist units such as intensive care or renal units.

However, GRE are sometimes found in the faeces of people who have never been in hospital or have not recently been given antibiotics.

What are the special precautions for patients with GRE?

Precautions are designed to prevent GRE spreading from person to person.

- Patients, staff and visitors must pay special attention to their hand hygiene practices.
- Patients with GRE will be nursed in a side room with the door closed, for the length of their hospital stay.
- Staff will wear disposable gloves and aprons whilst caring for patients with GRE.
- Cleaning of the environment will take place using a chlorine based detergent.

What happens when I get home?

Please complete any medication you have been given. You should carry on as normal, maintaining good hand hygiene. If you have any concerns you may wish to contact your GP.

The details of the GRE positive result will be included in the discharge letter to your GP.

Where can I find more information?

<https://www.gov.uk/health-protection/infectious-diseases>

The Infection Prevention and Control team, at the Royal Cornwall Hospital.
Telephone: 01872 254969

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

