

Tays / Infection Unit
Patient instructions 10.42.08

Information for VRE Carriers

A bacterial sample taken from you has tested positive for VRE bacteria. VRE stands for vancomycin-resistant Enterococci. This means that the detected bacteria have the ability to resist the antibiotic vancomycin. It may also be resistant to other antibiotics. Information about VRE carriage is recorded in your medical records as a risk factor.

Enterococci are part of the normal bacterial flora of the intestines. If the body's immune system is weakened, enterococcal bacteria can cause an infection. When an infection is caused by antibiotic-resistant VRE bacteria, fewer effective antibiotics are available for treatment. Therefore, its spread in hospitals and other health care units must be prevented. The most important measure is good hand hygiene.

VRE carrier is a person who has been found to have VRE bacteria. VRE carriage is not a disease but an abnormality in the body's normal bacterial flora. VRE infection is an infection caused by VRE bacteria.

As a patient in the inpatient ward and at the clinic

In inpatient care, you will have a private patient room and a toilet. Sometimes there may be a carrier of the same VRE bacteria in the same room. Every person entering the room must practice good hand hygiene. This means disinfecting one's hands before entering and upon leaving the room. The staff will guide you and your loved ones on good hand hygiene. When seeking treatment, it is advisable to mention your VRE status, as it may affect potential antibiotic treatment.

Staff will wear a protective gown and gloves when treating you. Protective clothing is not worn for popping in to bring medication or a meal tray, for example.

You will be treated normally at the health clinic and oral health care. Observe good hand hygiene when visiting the clinic.

Things to consider at home

VRE carriage does not affect life at home, at work, in hobbies or in personal relationships. You can meet your friends and family as usual. If you have open or purulent wounds, do not go to a swimming hall or public sauna. The spread of bacteria at home can be prevented with regular household hygiene practices:

- Wash your hands after using the toilet, before preparing food, and before eating.
- Wash and dry your hands before and after handling wounds and catheters.
- Hygiene products are for personal use only.
- Regular cleaning agents are sufficient for cleaning.
- Laundry can be washed normally.

If you have any questions, you can contact the Tays hygiene nurse at tel. 044 4729385.

Monitoring VRE carriage

There is no antibiotic available to eradicate VRE bacteria. VRE may disappear from the body on its own. Its disappearance can be monitored systematically through screening samples.

- Carriage monitoring may be started at the earliest one year after VRE was first detected or last found in bacterial culture samples.
- If you have a chronic wound, you can ask the hygiene nurse for instructions at tel. 044 472 9385.
- Monitoring samples should be taken in a situation where you have not had antibiotic treatment for a week.
- An indwelling catheter or cystofix is not an obstacle to monitoring.

VRE carriage monitoring samples

Samples monitoring carriage must be taken three times. Monitoring samples are taken approximately every one and a half months. There must be at least three months between the first and last sample collection. Request referrals and instructions for VRE screening samples from your local health center or occupational health services.

Sample collection sites:

- VRE screening sample ([VREVi 1788](#)) as a stool sample or rectal mucosal swab sample
- If you have a cystofix, VREVi sample will be taken from the catheter insertion site and a separate urine bacterial culture sample (U-BaktVi 1155) collected.
- If you have an indwelling catheter, a single urine bacterial culture sample (U-BaktVi 1155) will be collected.

VRE follow-up samples can be taken as instructed at home, at a nurse's appointment, during inpatient care, at another healthcare unit, or in home care. You can collect the samples yourself at home, provided that sample collection and storage follow the sampling instructions.

If no VRE bacteria are found in the aforementioned samples, you can inquire about the removal of the risk record by contacting the hygiene nurse of the Tays Infection Unit at 044 472 9385. You can call yourself or ask a doctor or nurse to call. The decision to remove the VRE risk record is made by the Infection Unit. Contact precautions will be terminated after the risk record has been removed.

Required information when calling:

- skin condition and health status
- regular medication and most recent antibiotic course
- VRE carriage monitoring samples and their results

If VRE bacteria are still detected in the monitoring samples, a new round of monitoring can be started after one year.