

Patient Information

Infection Control

Glycopeptide Resistant Enterococcus (GRE)

What is GRE?

GRE is short for Glycopeptide resistant Enterococcus.

Enterococcus is a bacteria which is carried harmlessly in the gut. GRE is one type of Enterococcus which is resistant to the Glycopeptide (vancomycin, teicoplanin) type of antibiotics.

How did I get GRE?

You may have had it in your gut before you came into hospital but is more often acquired whilst in hospital. Most commonly it is spread on the hands. If hands come into contact with GRE and are not washed thoroughly before touching someone else, GRE bacteria can be passed to the next person.

Will it affect me?

You can have GRE in your gut without being aware of it, or being affected in any way. So it may not affect you physically at all. However in some people it can cause an infection.

What will happen to me now?

Your treatment in hospital won't be affected by having GRE. But whilst you are in hospital you may be given a single room or be cared for in a specific area of the ward with other patients who may also have GRE.

Staff will wear gloves and aprons when giving care. All staff and visitors entering your room will need to wash their hands or use the alcohol hand rub before leaving.

Your room will be cleaned thoroughly every day. Housekeeping staff who clean your room will also wear gloves and an apron.

Otherwise your treatment in hospital will carry on as usual. You can go for any tests, physiotherapy or occupational therapy that you may need in other departments. Your meals will also be served as usual.

How do you know I have GRE?

A specimen was sent to the Microbiology laboratory for testing which has shown GRE.

How is GRE treated?

Treatment is not necessary in most cases. However, if required, your doctor will discuss this with you.

Can I do anything to help GRE clear?

Sometimes, GRE may clear or go away on its own although occasionally it can persist in your gut for long periods. There are no known methods which will specifically clear it from your gut.

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Will the treatment of my original condition be affected?

It is most unlikely but you should discuss this with your doctor.

Are my visitors at risk of GRE?

No. GRE does not normally affect healthy people. Your visitors should thoroughly wash and dry their hands before leaving your room. It is quite safe for pregnant women and children to visit you.

Will it delay my going home?

No, it should not. If you are going into a nursing or residential home, you may have a single room but you will be able to mix freely with other residents.

What happens if I am admitted to hospital again in the future?

You may be given a single room and swabs taken from your rectum and any wounds will be sent to the laboratory. If these swabs are found to be clear you may be moved into the general ward where you can mix freely with other patients.

Further information

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet. We hope it was useful. If you want more information please talk to the nursing staff or contact the Infection Control Team.

Infection Control Team: Conquest Hospital, (01424) 755255 ext 8610
Eastbourne DGH, (01323) 417400 ext 4136

Important information

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. It is not definitive. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that it is always subject to change. Please, therefore, always check specific advice on the procedure or any concerns you may have with your doctor.

Hand Hygiene

In the interests of our patients the trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is a very important factor in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available throughout our hospitals at the patient bedside for staff to use and also at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require this leaflet in any other format such as larger print, audio tape, Braille or an alternative language, please ask at one of our PALS' offices.

If you require interpreting services during your hospital visit please ask a member of staff who will be able to organise this for you via the appropriate department.

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After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

The Infection Control Team have been consulted and agreed this patient information.

Date Agreed: September 2009
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Responsible Clinician: Tina Lloyd, Deputy Director of Infection Prevention and Control