

Information for People Who Have Tested Positive for VRE or LRE

You have received this information because VRE or LRE was detected in a sample taken during your healthcare visit. This leaflet explains what VRE and LRE are and what this may mean for you.

What are VRE and LRE?

Enterococci are bacteria that naturally live in the intestines and genital tract. VRE and LRE are types of enterococci that are resistant to several antibiotics. If you have VRE or LRE in your intestines without developing symptoms or an infection, you are considered a **carrier** of VRE or LRE. You are also considered a carrier if the bacteria were first discovered as the cause of an infection.

Is it dangerous to be a carrier of VRE or LRE?

Most people who carry VRE or LRE do not develop an infection and do not become ill because of the bacteria. However, if you develop an infection caused by VRE or LRE, it may be more difficult to treat than other enterococcal infections.

How do VRE and LRE spread?

VRE and LRE bacteria live in the intestines and are passed in stool (faeces). The bacteria can contaminate the hands after using the toilet or after contact with stool. From there, they can spread to other people, either through direct contact or indirectly through contaminated objects and surfaces, such as door handles and other frequently touched surfaces.

What can I do to reduce the risk of spreading these bacteria to others?

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water:
 - before preparing or eating food
 - after using the toilet
 - after contact with bodily fluids, for example when caring for wounds, a urine drainage bag, or a urinary catheter
 - whenever your hands are visibly dirty
 - when visiting a hospital, nursing home, or other healthcare facility
- Wash towels and bed linen at 90°C (194°F) if the fabrics can tolerate this temperature.
- When cleaning your home, pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, light switches, and other commonly touched surfaces.

Can I attend daycare, school, or work if I am a carrier of VRE or LRE?

Children who carry VRE or LRE can attend daycare or school and take part in leisure activities and play as usual.

Adults can continue to work as normal even if they are carriers of VRE or LRE. Remember to follow the advice above to reduce the risk of spreading the bacteria to others.

Who do I need to tell that I am a carrier of VRE or LRE?

You should inform healthcare providers that you are a carrier of VRE or LRE whenever you receive healthcare, for example when visiting a doctor or if you are admitted to a hospital or nursing home. Information about your carrier status will also be recorded in your medical record. This helps healthcare professionals prevent the spread of infection and choose the most appropriate treatment if you develop an infection.

If your partner or other members of your household need healthcare, they should also inform healthcare providers that they live with someone who is a carrier of VRE or LRE.

You do not need to inform your employer, colleagues, friends, your child's school, or daycare provider that you are a carrier of VRE or LRE.

What happens if I am admitted to a hospital or nursing home?

If you are a carrier of VRE or LRE, infection prevention measures may be needed during your stay in a hospital or nursing home to reduce the risk of spreading the bacteria to others. The specific measures will depend on the situation. These may include:

- A private room and private bathroom.
- Healthcare staff wearing personal protective equipment such as gloves and gowns.
- More frequent cleaning of rooms and equipment.
- In hospitals, isolation may sometimes be necessary. This means you may be asked to stay in your room and avoid using shared areas or having close contact with other patients.

Even if infection prevention measures are required, you are entitled to receive the same healthcare as any other patient.

Can I get rid of VRE or LRE?

There is currently no treatment that can eliminate carriage of VRE or LRE.

In some people, the bacteria may disappear naturally after months or years. However, there is no reliable test that can confirm with certainty that you are no longer carrying VRE or LRE. For this reason, follow-up screening tests are not recommended.

If you have any questions about VRE or LRE, please speak with your doctor.