



## **VRE & MRSA INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES**

Renfrew Victoria Hospital takes your care and your safety very seriously and we are extremely committed to transparency. On a quarterly basis, beginning in December 2008, we will be reporting our infection rates on our website.

If you have any questions about the information below or about our hospital's infection prevention and control program, please contact Sheila Havey at 613-432-4851 ext262.

### **Measuring Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and vancomycin-resistant Enterococci (VRE) rates.**

Renfrew Victoria Hospital posts its infection rates online on a quarterly basis. On this website, you can find information about hospital-acquired infection rates for MRSA and VRE.

### **What does hospital-acquired mean?**

Sometimes when patients are admitted to the hospital, they can get infections. This is a hospital-acquired infection. In the case of either MRSA or VRE, this may mean that symptoms begin 72 hours after admission to the hospital.

### **What is Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)?**

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a type of bacteria that is resistant to certain or all types of the beta-lactam classes of antibiotics such as penicillins, penicillinase-resistant penicillins (e.g. cloxacillin) and cephalosporins. MRSA are strains of *S. aureus* that have an MIC to oxacillin of  $\geq 4$  mcg/ml. or contain the *mecA* gene coding for penicillin binding protein 2a (PBP 2a).

### **What is Vancomycin-resistant Enterococci (VRE)?**

Enterococci are bacteria that are normally present in the human intestines and in the female genital tract and are often found in the environment. These bacteria can sometimes cause infections. Vancomycin is an antibiotic that is often used to treat infections caused by enterococci. In some instances, enterococci have become resistant to this drug and thus are called vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE). VRE have a minimal inhibitory concentration (MIC) to vancomycin of  $\geq 32$  mcg/ml. They contain the resistance genes VAN-A or VAN-B.

### **What are the risk factors for MRSA?**

Risk factors for MRSA acquisition include invasive procedures, prior treatment with antibiotics, prolonged hospital stay, stay in an intensive care or burn unit, surgical wound infection and close proximity to a colonized person. MRSA can also be transmitted from mother to child through breast milk.

### **What are the risk factors for VRE?**

Risk factors for VRE include severity of underlying illness, presence of invasive devices, prior colonization with VRE, antibiotic use and length of hospital stay.

### **How is MRSA transmitted?**

The single most important mode of transmission of MRSA in a health care setting is via transiently colonized hands of health care workers who acquire it from contact with colonized or infected patients, or after handling contaminated material or equipment. The unrecognized colonized patient presents a particular risk for transmission to other patients.

### **How is VRE transmitted?**

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### **How are MRSA and VRE diagnosed?**

Patients who qualify for MRSA / VRE screening:

- have been admitted to any hospital within previous twelve months
- have a previous history of MRSA or VRE colonization and / or infection
- significant high risk patient populations (regional)
- patients recently exposed to outbreak unit

Patients who meet one of the above criteria on admission or transfer from another facility, have nasal and rectal swabs acquired for MRSA and rectal swabs acquired for VRE. Sometimes MRSA / VRE is diagnosed during hospital stay from a wound culture or blood culture taken for other reasons.

### **How are MRSA and VRE treated?**

Treatment depends on how sick patients are with the disease. Generally patients who are only colonized are not treated. Patients with these organisms in wound sites or in their blood are considered infected and receive treatment with appropriate antibiotics.

### **What precautions are used to prevent the spread of both MRSA and VRE in the hospital?**

Isolation precautions usually in a private room are used to control spread. Your activities outside the room may be restricted. All health care staff who enter your room will wear a gown and gloves. Everyone MUST clean their hands when leaving your room.

### **What Renfrew Victoria Hospital is doing to improve patient safety?**

We have a patient safety program in the hospital to make sure that all practices are at the highest level possible to keep you safe. This includes:

- ensuring that our housekeeping practices are in line with the best practices in healthcare
- following the “Just Clean Your Hands” program for excellence in hand hygiene
- conducting audits on various practices to verify that patient care is as safe as possible
- implementing programs such as “fall prevention”, “medication safety” and “safer Healthcare Now” initiatives.