

# Ask CDC

## VRE

### (Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci)

*[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.*

Welcome to *Ask CDC*, the weekly podcast that answers *your* questions. I'm your host, Susan Laird.

This week's question is from a pregnant woman who is bringing her grandmother home from the hospital. This mom-to-be is concerned because her grandmother has VRE, or vancomycin-resistant enterococci. She wants to know if the family can catch it.

VRE are bacteria that can live in the human intestines and female genital tract without causing disease, but sometimes they can be the cause of urinary tract infections, bloodstream infections, and wound infections. In general, healthy people are at low risk of getting infections with multidrug-resistant organisms, such as VRE. Therefore, casual contact, such as kissing, hugging, and touching, is OK. Disposable gloves should be worn if contact with body fluids is expected. If excessive contact with fluids is expected, gowns should be worn.

It's also OK for infants and children to have casual contact with people infected with VRE. Visitors should wash their hands before leaving an infected person's home.

It is unlikely that the grandmother's infection will spread to others in the household, however, there are several things that can be done to keep from spreading it.

- Wash your hands often and well with soap and water, especially after using the bathroom, before preparing food, and after close contact with people who have VRE. Be sure to rub your hands together for at least 15 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- Keep areas of your home clean that are likely to become contaminated with VRE, such as bathrooms. Use a household disinfectant or a mixture of one-fourth cup of bleach and one quart of water.
- Again, wear gloves if you might come in contact with body fluids that may contain VRE, such as urine, blood, or stool. Always wash your hands after removing the gloves.

For more information about VRE, go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and search on "VRE" OR call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Thanks for listening. To submit *your* question to *Ask CDC*, e-mail us at [askcdc@cdc.gov](mailto:askcdc@cdc.gov).

*[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.*