Quick Facts

About …Vancomycin intermediate *Staphylococcus aureus* (VISA) and Vancomycin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (VRSA)

What is *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph)?

Staph bacteria are commonly found on the skin and in the nose of healthy people. These bacteria can cause mild infections, such as pimples and boils, or serious infections, such as pneumonia, surgical wound infections, or bloodstream infections. Traditional treatment of these infections has been with penicillin or related antibiotics. Over the years, staph bacteria have become resistant to these antibiotics.

What are VISA and VRSA?

VISA (Vancomycin intermediate *Staphylococcus aureus*) and VRSA (Vancomycin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) are bacteria that have developed resistance to the antibiotic vancomycin and, therefore, cannot be treated with vancomycin. While VISA and VRSA infections are rare, they can be serious and difficult to treat.

How are VISA and VRSA spread?

VISA and VRSA are spread by close skin contact with an infected person or by contact with an infectious person's wound bandages or drainage.

Who is at risk for VISA and VRSA?

Your risk is higher if you:

- Had a previous infection with Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) (please refer to Quick Facts about MRSA)
- Have a history of diabetes
- Have a history of kidney disease
- Have tubes or catheters in your body
- Have recently been a patient in a health care facility
- Have recently used vancomycin or other antibiotics

How do I know if I have VISA or VRSA?

See your health care provider. Your health care provider may collect a sample from the infected area and send it to a laboratory. Laboratory tests can determine if you have VISA or VRSA infection.

How are VISA and VRSA treated?

Your health care provider will determine which antibiotics would be effective.

How are VISA and VRSA prevented?

- Wash your hands properly and often (please refer to Quick Facts about Hand Washing).
- Avoid direct contact with another person's wound, drainage, or bandages.
- Health care providers should follow appropriate infection control measures.
- Use antibiotics wisely to prevent resistance (please refer to Quick Facts about Antibiotic Use and Antibiotic Resistance).

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_visavrsa_FAQ.html

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