

# FACT SHEET **Vancomycin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* VRSA**

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## **What is *Staphylococcus aureus***

*Staphylococcus aureus*, often simply referred to a "staph," are bacteria (germs) commonly found on the skin and in the noses of healthy people. Occasionally, staph can cause infection. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the U.S. Most of these infections are minor (such as pimples, boils, and other skin conditions) and can be treated without antibiotics. Staph bacteria can also cause serious and sometimes fatal infections, such as bloodstream infections, surgical wound infections, and pneumonia. In the past, most serious infections were treated with a type of antibiotic related to penicillin. Over the past 50 years, treatment of these infections has become more difficult because staph bacteria have become resistant to various antibiotics, including the commonly used penicillin-related antibiotics.

## **What are VISA and VRSA?**

Vancomycin intermediate *Staph aureus* (VISA) and vancomycin resistant staph aureus (VRSA) are specific types of antibiotic-resistant staph bacteria. While most staph bacteria are susceptible to the antibiotic vancomycin, some have developed resistance. VISA and VRSA cannot be successfully treated with vancomycin because it no longer kills them. To date all VISA and VRSA infections have been susceptible to other antibiotics.

## **Who gets VISA and VRSA infections?**

Persons that have developed VISA and VRSA infections often have had several other health problems such as diabetes and kidney disease, previous infections with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), tubes going into their bodies such as intravenous (IV) catheters, recent hospitalizations, and recently been given vancomycin and other antibiotics.

## **What should I do if I think I have a Staph, MRSA, VISA, or VRSA infection?**

See your healthcare provider.

## **Are VISA and VRSA infections treatable?**

Yes. To date, all VISA and VRSA infections have been susceptible to several other antibiotics.

## **How can the spread of VISA and VRSA be prevented?**

Use of appropriate infection control practices, like wearing gloves when caring for someone with VISA or VRSA and washing hands with plain or antimicrobial soap after removing gloves, by anyone caring for someone infected can reduce the spread of VISA and VRSA.