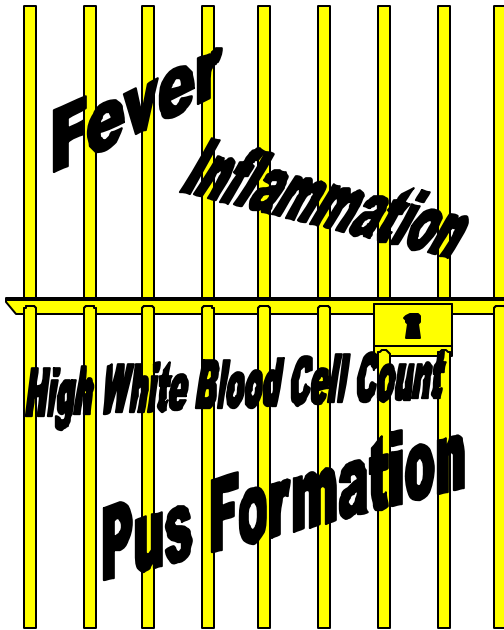


When Good Bugs Go Bad

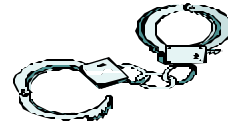
Like Staphylococcus, *Enterococcus* is part of the body's normal bacteria. These "good" bacteria are found in the gut. They join other bacteria to protect our intestines from infectious microbes and are harmless...

Unless the body's defenses are down and then these good bacteria can invade tissue, multiply, and cause infection. At one time, enterococcal infections were treated with Penicillin. However, like Staphylococcus, some Enterococci strains have developed resistance to penicillin. Some have developed resistance to Vancomycin. This new resistant bad bug is called **VRE** (Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci).



VRE's "MO"

VRE enters hospitals through infected or colonized patients or health care workers. It is spread through direct contact between the patient and the caregiver or patient-to-patient. It is also spread through the contact with contaminated surfaces. It can live for weeks on environmental surfaces.



"Putting the cuffs on" VRE

- ❑ **Hand washing** is the most effective way to prevent VRE from spreading.
- ❑ Institute contact precautions, one of the three types of transmission-based precautions (the other 2 are airborne and droplet). Use dedicated equipment and don gloves and gown when you anticipate exposure to the patient or the environmental surfaces in the patient room. If you bring in other equipment, such as a pulse oximeter, don't lay it on the bed or table and wipe it with an appropriate disinfectant before leaving the room.
- ❑ After removing gown and gloves don't touch any potentially contaminated surface (bed or over the bed table).
- ❑ Change gloves when moving from a "dirty" area of the body to a clean one.
- ❑ Be particularly prudent in caring for a patient with an ileostomy, colostomy, or draining wound not contained by a dressing.
- ❑ Educate visitors on why they need to wear protective equipment, how to put it on, and how to dispose of it. Make sure they understand how to wash their hands before they leave the room.
- ❑ Teach patients to take all of the antibiotics that have been prescribed, even if he begins to feel better.
- ❑ Patients should also be educated that not all diseases can be treated with antibiotics.
- ❑ Place all soiled linen directly in a linen bag. Avoid putting it on the floor, the bedside table or on furniture. If the outer surface of the linen bag is contaminated, double-bag outside the room.