Vancomycin-intermediate/resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*  
(VISA/VRSA)

**Disease Fact Sheet**

**What are VISA and VRSA?**
VISA and VRSA refer to *Staphylococcus aureus*, or “staph” bacteria that are resistant to the antibiotic vancomycin, but infections caused by these organisms can usually be treated with other antibiotics.

**Where do VISA/VRSA occur?**
VISA and VRSA infections are usually acquired in healthcare settings such as hospitals, and do not typically spread in the community.

**Who gets VISA/VRSA?**
VISA and VRSA infections are rare and usually occur among individuals who have serious underlying medical conditions, have received prolonged vancomycin treatment, or who have medical devices such as catheters or ventilators. Healthy individuals do not usually acquire VISA or VRSA infections.

**How are VISA/VRSA spread?**
VISA and VRSA are spread by close physical contact with infected patients or contaminated surfaces and medical equipment. To prevent patient-to-patient transmission, healthcare personnel, patients, family members and visitors should wash hands after contact with patients or contact with surfaces, items and patient care equipment in the patient’s environment.

**What are the symptoms of VISA/VRSA?**
Patients who acquire VISA or VRSA may have mild symptoms, however these organisms can also cause serious infections such as bacteremia (bloodstream infection), pneumonia (usually in people with underlying lung disease or those on ventilators), endocarditis (infection of the heart valves), and osteomyelitis (bone infection).

**What should a patient do if a VISA or VRSA infection is suspected?**
Anyone who suspects this type of infection should see a healthcare provider.