

Enterococcus species

Organism

- [Gram-positive](#) cocci typically in pairs and short chains.
- Facultative anaerobe [\(def\)](#).
- Most commonly isolated species are [Enterococcus faecalis](#) and *Enterococcus faecium*.

Habitat

- Normal flora of the intestinal tract in humans and animals.

Source

- Usually the patient's own fecal flora; some transmission is patient-to-patient.

Clinical Disease

- Responsible for about 10% of all nosocomial infections [\(def\)](#).
- Most common infections are urinary tract infections (UTIs) and bacteremia [\(def\)](#).
- Other infections include endocarditis [\(def\)](#) as a complication of bacteremia and wound infections; infections within the peritoneal cavity including intra-abdominal abscesses (usually polymicrobial [\(def\)](#)) especially following penetrating trauma such as gunshot wounds, knife wounds, and surgical wounds; kidney infections as a complication of UTIs, prostate infections, and infections of damaged or compromised skin, such as diabetic or decubitus ulcers, burns, and surgical wounds (often polymicrobial).
- The enterococci have become the second most common bacterium isolated from nosocomial urinary and wound infections, and the third most common cause of nosocomial bacteremia. Each year in the U.S., in fact, enterococci account for approximately 110,000 urinary tract infections, 40,000 wound infections, 25,000 cases of nosocomial bacteremia, and 1100 cases of endocarditis.
- Predisposing factors include:
 - urinary [\(def\)](#) and intravenous catheters [\(def\)](#).
 - long-term hospitalization while receiving broad-spectrum antibiotics.

From [Enterococcal Infections](#), by Curtis J Donskey, MD, Chairman of Infection Control, Instructor, Department of Internal Medicine, Section of Infectious Diseases, Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center, Case Western Reserve University and Robert A Salata, MD, Chief and Clinical Program Director of Division of Infectious Diseases, Vice Chair for International Affairs, Professor, Department of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

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Updated: January 4, 2005

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