

PVL-*Staphylococcus aureus* information for service users

Staphylococcus aureus is a common type of bacteria (germ) that approximately one in three people carry on their skin or in their nose without being aware of it. *Staphylococcus aureus* can live harmlessly on your skin or in your nose for long periods without causing any illness. This is known as colonisation.

Some types of *Staphylococcus aureus* (SA) produce a toxin (poison) called Panton-Valentine Leukocidin (PVL) and these are known as PVL-SA.

What does PVL-SA cause?

PVL-SA can cause an infection if it gets into a wound, cut or a graze. A boil or abscess can develop anywhere on the skin, but most likely occur at the site of a hair follicle. On rare occasions, it can cause serious infection of the lungs, blood, joints and bones.

How is PVL-SA spread?

- PVL-SA can be picked up by having direct skin contact with someone who is already infected or carrying the bacteria, such as a close family member or during contact sports, for example rugby.
- It can also be picked up by contact with an item or surface that has PVL-SA on it, for example, gym equipment, shared razors, shared towels.

How is PVL-SA treated?

- People who are colonised with PVL-SA do not usually require treatment.
- Most boils will burst and heal on their own without the need for antibiotics and/or incision and drainage.
- You should seek advice from your GP if you are concerned or have either a high temperature or flu like symptoms.
- To reduce the possibility of you developing further infections and help prevent the spread of PVL-SA to others, you may be prescribed a five day skin suppression treatment consisting of a body wash and nasal ointment. It is important to follow the skin suppression treatment correctly and follow the environmental cleaning advice below to increase the success of the treatment.
- Your GP or local Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team will assess if members of your household or close contacts require screening and/or skin suppression treatment. If both you and your close contacts are advised to undertake suppression treatment, the treatment should be co-ordinated to start on the same day.

Can I go to work or school or sports facilities when I have a PVL-SA infection?

- You should not use communal facilities, such as gym equipment, saunas, swimming pools or have a massage, manicure or similar until your skin has healed.
- You should remain off work until wounds are healed and completion of suppression treatment if:
 - * You have an active skin condition, such as eczema or psoriasis
 - * You are a carer in a nursery or health care setting, such as hospital or care home
 - * You work in the food industry, for example as a waitress, chef, or in food production
- For other occupations you can work, provided you keep infected skin areas covered with a clean dressing.
- Children can go to school if they are old enough to understand the importance of, and can carry out, good hand hygiene and their infected skin is covered with a clean dressing which will stay dry and in place until the end of the school day. Children should not take part in contact sport or use communal gym equipment until their skin is healed. You should inform the School Nurse of the diagnosis.

To help prevent the infection spreading to others, you should:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, as PVL-SA can live in your nose. Immediately dispose of the tissue and then wash your hands
- Keep boils or abscesses covered with a clean dressing. Change the dressing regularly or when there is visible discharge
- **Do not** touch, poke or squeeze boils or abscesses as this can contaminate your hands and can cause a deeper infection
- Keep fingernails clean and short and wash your hands regularly with liquid soap and warm running water, e.g. after changing your dressing, before and after preparing food
- Encourage others at home to wash their hands regularly with liquid soap and warm running water or use a hand wipe or alcohol handrub
- Use a clean towel and facecloth for your use only, these should not be shared and kept separately to avoid contamination. They should be washed on the hottest temperature stated on the label
- Not share personal items, such as razors, toothbrushes, hair brushes or combs
- Wash razors after each use or use disposable razors. Electric or battery operated razors can be used if you can clean the razor head effectively after each use
- Wash hands before applying facial or body moisturisers. Wash make-up brushes or use disposable make-up sponges
- Using aerosol deodorants can also prevent contamination of roll-on deodorants
- Clean any spectacles and sun glasses worn with an appropriate cleaning product, paying particular attention to the areas in contact with your skin
- Only wear jewellery and watches that can be washed or wiped daily with detergent and warm water
- Corsodyl mouthwash may help to kill PVL-SA bacteria which is often carried in the throat
- During the 5 day treatment, wash bed linen and towels daily and wear clean clothing each day
- If you do not wear socks, then spray the inside of footwear with an antibacterial spray
- Not share drinking bottles/cans, e.g. water, soft drinks

Environmental cleaning

- Clean the wash basin, taps and shower or bath after use with a bathroom cleaner or household detergent and a cloth. Launder the cloth after use.
- Regularly vacuum and dust all rooms (with a damp cloth, ensuring all personal items and shared items, such as keyboards, are cleaned. Vacuum or steam clean sofas, chairs, mattresses regularly.
- Use a laundry bin with a plastic liner which can be cleaned, or a fabric one that can be washed in a washing machine weekly.
- Launder bedding and towels at the highest temperature recommended on the label.
- Use mattress and pillow protectors and wash regularly. Launder or replace pillows and duvets on a regular basis.
- If a child has PVL-SA, wash comforters, soft toys and child car seat covers regularly.
- Wipe equipment, such as mobile phones, tablets, game consoles, including accessories, with a detergent wipe on a regular basis.
- If you use/attend a gym, wipe gym equipment before and after use with hard surface cleaning wipes.

If you require further advice and information on PVL-*Staphylococcus aureus*, please contact your local Community Infection Prevention and Control or UK Health Security Agency Team.