

## Infection Prevention and Control Department

# PVL - SA Infections

### What is PVL?

Staphylococcus aureus (SA) is a type of bacteria that commonly lives on healthy skin but can cause boils or skin abscesses and is occasionally associated with more serious infections of the lungs, blood, joints and bones. Some produce a toxin called Panton-Valentine Leukocidin (PVL). PVL-SA is most commonly associated with causing recurrent abscesses.

### How do you get PVL - SA?

PVL can be picked up by having skin-to-skin contact with someone who carries PVL, e.g. between family members or through contact sports, or contact with something contaminated with PVL from someone else, for example shared gym equipment, shared razors, shared towels.

### How do you prevent spreading PVL-SA to other people?

Any fluid or pus from infected skin contains large numbers of the bacteria so keep them covered with clean, dry dressing or plaster and change them if fluid or pus seeps through.

- Wash your hands before and after changing plasters or dressings or touching infected skin and encourage others to do the same if they are helping you dress your wounds.
- Use a separate towel. Take steps to prevent others using it by mistake.
- Because SA is a skin bacteria it is shed on skin scales. Regularly vacuum and clean (wipe with a damp cloth) your home and personal items. Disinfectants are not needed.
- Clean your sink, shower and bath after each use.
- While you have any active lesions, avoid using communal facilities for example the gym, saunas, swimming pools etc.

### How do I prevent becoming infected again?

There are a few things you can do to prevent PVL-SA infections:

- Take good care of your skin. Do not touch, poke or squeeze infected skin. This contaminates your hands and can push the PVL-SA deeper into the skin.
- Keep cuts and grazes clean, apply disinfectant cream and cover with dry dressings. If infected (red, swollen, pain, pus) see your GP. Let them know you have had PVL-SA.
- Maintain personal hygiene: Shower or bathe every day, using a clean towel to dry; wear clean clothes every day; launder bedclothes weekly using biological washing detergent at the highest temperature the material will allow (if you can't manage weekly, do it as often as you can).
- Do not share personal items such as towels, facecloths, razors, toothbrushes.
- In places like gyms use your own clean towel to protect your skin from touching the equipment (on the seat/bench etc). Shower immediately after a session and use a second, clean towel to dry yourself. Wash both towels after each visit.

## How is PVL-SA treated?

You may only need a small abscess lancing by your GP or at your local hospital to drain away any pus. Large abscesses also require lancing but they and other infections may also require a course of antibiotics.

Once your active lesions are resolved, a five day skin treatment (nasal cream and body wash) may be prescribed to prevent repeat infections and also to reduce the chances that you may pass PVL-SA to others. Follow any instructions you are given carefully to increase the likelihood of this treatment getting rid of your PVL-SA.

In addition, it is important to consider any other members of your household who may also have symptoms (current or recent) as it is important that **all affected people in the household are treated at the same time** and follow the instructions fully.

## What happens if I am in hospital?

If you are admitted to hospital let the doctor or nurse know that you have had PVL-SA before to ensure your treatment is appropriate. Steps will also be taken to prevent spreading PVL-SA to other patients such as you will be provided with single room accommodation and your care staff will wear aprons and gloves while taking care of you.

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

There are a couple of professions (below) where you should not return to work while you have active lesions. If you are not sure, contact your occupational health department or GP.

- You should not work as a carer in a nursery, hospital or care home etc or in the food industry, e.g. chef, until your skin has healed and you have permission to return to work from your occupational health department or GP.
- Children can go to school, but need to understand the importance of good hand hygiene, and keep any infected skin covered with a clean dry dressing which will stay in place until the end of the school day. Children should not take part in contact sports, or use communal gym equipment while they have active lesions.

## If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Infection Control Nurse  
Calderdale Royal Hospital Telephone No: 01422 222376  
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary Telephone No: 01484 342447

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://www.cht.nhs.uk)

## If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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