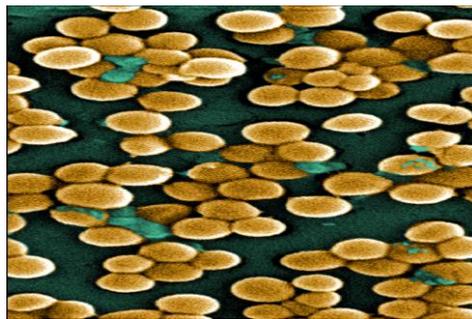


What is PVL *Staphylococcus aureus*?



Patient Information Leaflet

What is PVL Staphylococcus aureus?

Staphylococcus aureus ('SA') is a type of bacterium (germ) that commonly lives on healthy skin. About one third of healthy people carry it quite harmlessly, usually on moist surfaces, such as the nostrils, armpits and groin. Some types produce a toxin called Panton-Valentine Leukocidin (PVL) and they are known as PVL-SA's.

What type of illness does a PVL-SA cause?

PVL-SA's are more likely to cause infections than other SA's.

They can cause boils or skin abscesses and is occasionally associated with more serious infections of the lungs, blood, joints and bones.

How do you catch PVL-SA?

Anyone can get a PVL-SA infection. Infection can occur in fit, healthy people. PVL-SA can be picked up through:

- Skin-to-skin contact with someone who is already infected, for example close family or during contact sports.
- Contact with an item or surface that has PVL-SA on it, for example shared gym equipment, shared razors, shared towels.

How is PVL-SA treated?

Boils and abscesses may be drained by incision. Some infections may be treated with antibiotics. Also, the PVL-SA's carried on your skin may be cleared with a five day body wash. This is done to reduce the chances of you getting infections again and reduce the chances of you spreading PVL-SA's to others. In some patients this skin treatment may not be completely successful, but the more carefully you follow the instructions, the more likely you are to clear the PVL-SA's from your skin.

Your GP may want to check members of your household and close contacts, e.g. partners/children, in case they are also carrying PVL-SA's, and offering them skin treatments where necessary.

How do I prevent passing PVL-SA's to other people?

- Keep infected areas of your body covered with clean, dry dressings or plasters. Change these often and as soon as discharge seeps to the surface. It is important that fluid or pus from infected skin is contained, because it has large numbers of PVL-SA's that can spread to others.
- Do not touch or squeeze infected skin. This contaminates your hands and can push the PVL-SA's deeper into the skin.
- PVL-SA's can live in your nose. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, throw the tissue in the bin at once and then wash your hands.

- Wash your hands with liquid soap and water, especially after changing your dressings and plasters, or touching infected skin.
- Encourage others at home to wash their hands regularly.
- Use a separate towel and keep it separate. Wash separately at the highest temperature the fabric will allow.
- Vacuum and dust your rooms often. Clean shared items such as keyboards, telephones or mobiles often. Household detergent is adequate for cleaning.
- Clean your sink, taps and bath after use with a disposable cloth and household detergent, then rinse clean and throw away the cloth. Then wash your hands.

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

- You should not work as a carer in a nursery, hospital, residential care home or the food industry until your skin has healed and you have permission to return to work from your occupational health department or GP.
- If you are not sure about working, contact your occupational health department or GP.
- Children can go to school, only if they are old enough to understand the importance of good hand hygiene, and if their infected skin is covered with a clean dry dressing which will stay dry and in place until the end of the school day. Children should not take part in contact sports, or use communal gym equipment until their skin is healed.
- It is essential that the GP's advice be followed.
- School management should be informed and agreement sought before children return to school.
- People who suffer from skin conditions should remain off work or school until treatment has been completed for both the skin condition and the PVL-SA infection.
- Continue treating your skin to keep it in good condition. This helps to reduce the spread of PVL-SA's to others.

Can I go to swimming pools, gyms or sports facilities when I have a PVL-SA infection?

You should not use communal facilities for example gym equipment, saunas, swimming pools, or have a massage, manicure or similar until your skin has healed.

How do I prevent becoming infected again?

- You should take good care of your skin. If you suffer from a skin condition, discuss the best treatment for this with your GP.
- Keep all cuts and grazes clean with liquid soap and water, apply disinfectant cream, and cover with dry dressings until scabbed over or healed.
- Shower or bathe daily.
- Put on clean clothes daily, wash bedclothes and towels on a regular basis using normal washing detergent at the highest temperature the materials will allow.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, razors, toothbrushes, water bottles, and facecloths.
- In shared facilities, such as gyms, use fresh towels. Put a towel between your skin and the equipment. Importantly, shower afterwards and use a separate, clean towel to dry yourself. Wash the towels after each visit.
- Seek medical help at the first sign of infection in a cut, such as redness, swelling, pain, or pus.
- If you are found to carry PVL-SA persistently on your skin or nose, or if you suffer from repeated infections, you may be given a further course of skin treatment. If this fails to clear it and you have repeated infections then you may be given antibiotics and skin treatment together. Sometimes the skin treatment will be given to your household or close contacts. If this happens it is important that all affected people in a household or social group are treated at the same time.

If you have further infection of any type, if you are admitted to hospital always tell the doctor or nurse looking after you that you have had a PVL-SA infection. This will ensure you receive appropriate treatment.

The Public Health England website will give further guidance and information: <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection/infectious-diseases>

Should you have any further questions or require further advice please speak to your doctor, nurse or Infection Prevention staff.

Infection Prevention Team 01535 294848

Write any questions/queries below

If you require this leaflet in other languages or formats please telephone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on: 01535 294019 for advice.

Please raise any issue you may have about your care and treatment with a member of staff. Raising your concerns will not adversely affect the care you will receive.

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