

Panton Valentine Leucocidin (PVL) Staphylococcus Aureus

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What is PVL Staphylococcus aureus?

Staphylococcus aureus is a germ (a microbe or bacterium) that is a normal part of the skin flora (bacteria and fungi that live on healthy skin). It particularly likes to live on the moist surfaces of the body such as inside the nostrils, in the armpits and in the groin area. People in the wider community carry many different strains of staphylococcus aureus. Some strains are more likely to cause infections than others. Those that secrete a toxin called Panton-Valentine Leukocidin (PVL) are more likely to cause infections, particularly on the skin.

The number of cases of this strain of *S. aureus* has been rising over the past few years. Almost all of the cases identified so far have been in normally fit, healthy people living at home, or those living in nursing and residential homes. It is not usually found in hospital patients.

Frequently asked questions

Is it harmful?

Most of the time *S. aureus* live harmlessly on the skin. However, PVL *S. aureus* is more likely to cause skin infections than other strains. In the majority of cases it causes boils (skin abscesses).

On occasion it causes more serious infection, such as pneumonia and septicaemia (blood poisoning), although these cases are rare.

Why is it a problem?

Some people require a minor operation to drain skin abscesses (boils) caused by the germ. Other members of the household or close contacts may also get skin infections.

What if I am carrying this germ?

If tests show that you have an infection or are carrying this germ, you will be offered a five-day skin treatment to try to get rid of it from your nose and skin. This reduces the chances of you getting repeated infections and passing it on to others. This treatment is best done soon after the skin has healed and is

separate from any antibiotics that you may be given. You should not work in a nursery, residential home or other healthcare facility if you have an active infection, such as a boil. 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. If in doubt, please discuss this with a member of the Infection Prevention Team or your GP.

Are my family or friends at risk?

As with any strain of *S. aureus* it is possible to pass it to the people we live with. For many people this just means that the germ will live on their skin or in their nose, i.e. they will 'carry' it. You can help reduce the spread of the germ to others by:

- Keeping the infected areas covered with clean, dry dressings or plasters.
- Regularly washing your hands.
- Encouraging others in your household to regularly wash their hands.
- Using separate towels and washing them frequently in a hot wash.

If you are worried that a family member has an infection, please discuss this with your doctor. All the family may need treating at the same time to break the cycle of re-infection.

Could this germ return?

Yes. PVL *S. aureus* is a strain of the normal germ that lives on our bodies and it can sometimes be difficult to get rid of. If you are found to be persistently carrying this germ in your nose or on your skin, this will be discussed by your nurse or doctor.

General notes on skin treatment

As with all treatments to be applied to the skin, avoid contact with the eyes. Those who are pregnant, have eczema, or are under a year old should be screened first to see if they are carrying the germ. The doctor or nurse who is arranging your treatment will explain how this is done – the doctor will then decide whether treatment is appropriate.

Whilst the skin treatments are being used, the following will help reduce spread of the germ within the household:

- Sheets/towels should be changed daily.
- Regularly vacuuming and dusting, particularly the bedrooms.
- Avoid bar soap and use pump action liquid soap instead.
- Use individual personal towels.
- Clean sink and bath with a disposable cloth and detergent, and then rinse clean.

How to use the skin decolonisation preparations Octenisan® Body Wash and mupirocin (Bactroban™ Nasal)

The purpose of this treatment is to try and rid the body of the germ that has caused boils or other infections. However, in order for the treatment to be effective, it is important that the preparations are used according to the following instructions.

Octenisan Body Wash (use for five days once a day)

- Do **NOT** apply to dry skin.
- Do **NOT** dilute body wash beforehand in water as this will reduce its ability to work effectively – apply directly to wet skin on a flannel or sponge.
- Body wash should remain in contact with the skin for about a minute before being rinsed off.
- It is important to ensure that the product is rinsed off the skin and the skin is dried properly, especially for people with skin conditions.
- Towels should be for individual use and changed daily.
- Pay particular attention to armpits, groin, under breasts, hands and buttocks.

Mupirocin (Bactroban Nasal Ointment)

- Use three times a day for five days.
- Apply a pea-sized amount (less for a small child) on the end of a cotton bud or the tip of your little finger to the inner surface of each nostril and massage gently upwards. Do not push the cotton bud up your nose.

Further Information

Please speak to an Infection Prevention & Control Nurse

The Infection Prevention Team

Telephone: 01493 453136

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courtesy and respect• A welcoming and positive attitude• Polite, friendly and interested in people• Value and respect people as individuals <p>So people feel welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attentively kind and helpful• Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity• Attentive, responsive & take time to help• Visible presence of staff to provide care <p>So people feel cared for</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsive communication• Listen to people & answer their questions• Keep people clearly informed• Involve people <p>So people feel in control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective and professional• Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring• Effective care / services from joined up teams• Organised and timely, looking to improve <p>So people feel safe</p> |
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The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

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