

Staphylococcus aureus

What is Staphylococcus aureus?

Staphylococcus aureus, known as 'Staph' or 'Staph aureus'. It is a bacterium which is commonly found on the skin and in the nose of healthy people. Up to 20% of healthy individuals may periodically carry Staphylococcus without any symptoms or illness, which is called colonization.

What infection does it cause and how is it treated?

Staphylococcus aureus can sometimes cause a range of infections from mild skin infections such as pimples, blisters and abscesses, especially after a break or a cut in skin or a minor abrasion, while more serious internal infections of deep tissues or blood may rarely occur.

Mild staphylococcal skin infection can be treated with simple drainage of the skin lesions or with simple antiseptic cleansing and wash. Topical antibiotics may be used and oral antibiotics are given if the infection is more pronounced such as in-patients with multiple skin lesions. Intravenous antibiotics are used if a person is unwell or particularly vulnerable, which the doctor may decide on clinical assessment.

How to prevent an infection?

Staphylococcus aureus is transmitted primarily by skin-to-skin contact and contact with contaminated items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's discharging lesions. Preventing staphylococcus infection is mainly focused on keeping the environment clean by applying good personal and environmental hygiene and in particular applying excellent hand hygiene practices.

As staphylococcus is so common in human beings and in our natural environment, we must ensure that during hospitalization all measures to prevent spread within the healthcare environment are effectively applied.

Infections can be prevented by the following ways:

- Practice good hand hygiene. Keep hands clean by washing hands frequently or after touching contaminated objects with soap and water. An alcohol based hand sanitizer may be used if hands are not visibly soiled.
- Wash or sanitize your hand each time before you touch your baby or other babies.
- If you have cuts and scrapes in your skin, clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid sharing personal items like towels and razors with others.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandage.
- Maintain a clean environment by cleaning touched surface frequently.

Should you screen for staphylococcal colonization?

As staphylococcus aureus is so common and the infection caused is mostly mild, in general doctors agree to reserve body screening for patients admitted to hospital who are at high risk or exposed.

Can I treat Staphylococcus if I am colonized?

Yes and no; One should pay more focus on prevention of spreading of the organism. Decolonization therapy is available, if this is indicated after risk assessment on yourself and your family members by your doctor, by applying nasal antibacterial ointment and an antiseptic shower. However, recurrence of colonization is not uncommon. Stringent hand hygiene practice remains the key strategy for preventing acquisition of and infection resulting from the organism.

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金黃葡萄球菌

什麼是金黃葡萄球菌？

金黃葡萄球菌 (Staphylococcus或簡稱Staph、Staph aureus)，常見於健康人士的皮膚和鼻腔內。多達二至五成的健康人士是帶菌者，他們在不同時候受到感染而沒有出現任何病徵或發病 (稱之為細菌寄存)。

金黃葡萄球菌是怎樣形成的、如何治療？

金黃葡萄球菌有時可以引起一連串感染，包括輕微的皮膚感染，如膿疱、水疱和膿腫，尤其當皮膚有傷口或輕微擦傷。在非常罕見的情況下，會引致較嚴重的深層組織或血液感染。

輕微的金黃葡萄球菌可以簡單的引流清洗傷口方法治理，或以消毒藥水沖洗處理，醫生或會處方外用抗生素。若感染的部位顯著，例如住院病人有多個傷口，醫生則會處方口服抗生素。如果病人感到不適或身體狀況虛弱，醫生經臨床評估後，或會處方靜脈注射抗生素療程。

如何預防感染？

金黃葡萄球菌主要由接觸皮膚、被污染物、分泌物或流膿的傷口感染。預防金黃葡萄球菌的最主要方法是要保持個人清潔及環境衛生，特別要注意雙手的衛生。由於金黃葡萄球菌常見於日常生活環境之中，故此我們必須確保住院期間，在各醫護部門實行各種感染控制措施，以防止細菌傳播。

各種預防措施包括：

- 保持雙手衛生。經常用視液及清水洗手，特別在接觸受污染的物品後。如無明顯污垢，可使用酒精搓手液。
- 每次接觸你的嬰兒或其他嬰兒前，先清洗或消毒雙手。
- 如皮膚上有傷口或刮傷，清洗、再使用防水敷料妥善覆蓋傷口直至傷口完全癒合。
- 不要跟他人共用個人物品，如毛巾和鬚刨。
- 不要接觸他人的傷口或敷料。
- 經常清潔常接觸的物品，保持環境清潔。

你應否接受金黃葡萄球菌檢驗？

由於金黃葡萄球菌十分常見而受感染後的影響較為溫和，一般來說，醫生只會為高風險的住院病人或其他有機會感染的人士進行檢驗。

若我有金黃葡萄球菌寄存，可以治療嗎？

沒有一個定斷的答案。我們須專注於預防細菌的傳播。醫生需檢視你和你家人的健康狀況，若評估為有染病風險，則會處方鼻腔抗菌藥膏或以消毒藥水沖身，以進行根除感染治療 (decolonization therapy)。然而，細菌再次寄存的情況並非罕見。保持雙手清潔仍然是最有效預防傳播和感染的方法。

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