

INFORMATION SHEET

STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS

1. What is Staphylococcus aureus or Staph?

Staph is a type of bacteria that is commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infection in the United States.

2. How do people get Staph Infections?

Anyone can get a Staph infection. People are more likely to get a Staph infection if they have:

- Skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Contact with items and surfaces that have Staph on them
- Openings in their skin such as cuts or scrapes
- Crowded living conditions
- Poor hygiene

3. What are the symptoms of a Staph infection?

The symptoms of a Staph infection depends on where the infection is
The Staph bacteria can cause:

- boils – an abscess within the skin
- cellulitis – a localized skin infection which can make the skin red, painful, and warm
- impetigo – causes blisters or honey crusted lesions on the skin
- paronychia – an infection of the skin folds of the nails

These infections can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage.

4. How can I prevent Staph skin infections?

Practice good hygiene:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

5. How are Staph infections treated?

Treatment for a Staph skin infection may include taking an antibiotic or having a doctor drain the infection. If you are given an antibiotic, be sure to take all of the doses, even if the infection is getting better, unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it. Do not share antibiotics with other people or save them to use later.