

# STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS

ALSO KNOW AS: S. AUREUS OR "STAPH"

# STREPTOCOCCUS PYOGENES

ALSO KNOWN AS: GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS OR GAS



BRIEF INTERVENTION  
INFORMATION - BACTERIAL  
INFECTIONS




S. aureus and GAS are part of the body's natural bacterial flora and are commonly found in peoples' nose, throat, skin, groin or anal area. Most of the time these bacteria do not cause any problems, however infection occurs when these bacteria enter the body via a wound (including injecting sites). The infection can be caused by their own bacteria, other peoples' bacteria, bacteria from environmental objects like soft furnishings or towels and, in the case of S. aureus, household pets.

These bacteria can be passed person to person, as well as through sharing drug paraphernalia (such as injecting equipment, spoons, filters, pipes to smoke drugs etc). There is also the possibility the substance itself is contaminated, however in the majority of GAS infections reported it is believed S. aureus and GAS are being spread person to person.





# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

 S. aureus and GAS can cause a range of symptoms in many areas of the body ranging from localised skin and soft tissue infection to wide spread and serious systemic infection. A person can experience one or more of these symptoms.

- Heat, swelling, redness, aches and pain around wound, joint or muscles
- Pus and/ or unpleasant smell from site of wound
- Wound that will not heal
- Abscess
- Cellulitis – red, painful, hot, swollen, tender, blistered skin
- Fever, chills
- Fast heartbeat
- Dizziness, confusion, disorientation

- Shortness of breath, fast breathing, difficulty breathing
- Symptoms of chest infection, such as a productive cough
- Pain in chest
- Headache
- Unexplained ‘bruising’ or rash
- Sore throat, difficulty swallowing
- Sore ear(s)
- Vomiting, nausea and diarrhoea



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# IF SOMEONE HAS SYMPTOMS

Untreated infections related to S.aureus and GAS can become progressively worse and can lead to death.

**EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND TREATMENT IS VITAL.**

If a person who uses drugs has any of the symptoms mentioned above they should

**SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION**

This can be via their general practitioner, calling NHS 24 on 111, with staff at Drug & Alcohol services, Wound clinics or if symptoms are severe people should be encouraged to attend Accident & Emergency (with support where possible).



**IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS  
CALL 999 OR ATTEND A&E.**



# RISK REDUCTION ADVICE



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## S. AUREUS AND GAS

- Wash hands and maintain good personal hygiene
- Consider alternative way of using drugs or ways of reducing the frequency of injecting such as oral use e.g. wrapping in cigarette paper and swallowing (called bombing), smoking or snorting or via the rectal method.
- If injecting, wash hands and injection site thoroughly prior to use. New injecting equipment and paraphernalia, including water for injection ampoules, should be used for every injection.
- Filter substances prior to injecting and use only a small amount of any acidifier.

- If injecting stimulant substances such as cocaine or ethylphenidate, consider if you need to use an acidifier such as vit c or citric acid at all, as this is not required unless converting crack or freebase cocaine to injectable forms.
- Ensure the substance is injected directly into a vein (intra muscular and subcutaneous injection are associated with a greater amount of tissue damage which in turn helps bacterial infection to develop)
- If possible, stop use altogether (support a person to look at their treatment options)
- If the person feels unwell, or has any of the symptoms of
- GAS infection they should seek medical advice quickly