

General Information

- *S. aureus* is a bacteria that lives (called colonisation) on some peoples skin, and can intermittently cause infection (boils, cellulitis etc). The idea is to eliminate the bacterial colonisation of the skin, throat and nose in order to reduce the chance of future infections. Antibiotics tend to just treat the infection but not the colonisation.
- Decolonisation should only begin after any acute infection has been treated and has resolved.
- Treatment to eliminate *S. aureus* colonisation in the most affected member of the household is usually all that is required to prevent recurrences in all household members.
- The decolonisation period is for one week

Skin Decolonisation

- Shower or bathe for one week using an antiseptic.
- If you bathe: add 1 mL of plain unscented 5% bleach per 1 L of bathwater (or 2 mL of 2.2% bleach per 1 L of water). N.B. A regular-sized bath filled to a depth of 10 cm contains approximately 80 L of water and a baby's bath holds approximately 15 L of water. After immersing in the bath water for 10 – 15 minutes, rinse with fresh water. The bleach bath should be repeated two to three times within the week.
- If you shower: daily for one week using chlorhexidine 4% body wash, applied with a clean cloth (and preferably left on the skin for at least five minutes), particularly focusing on the armpits, groin and bottom. Hair can be washed with the antiseptic also.

Throat Decolonisation

- As *S. aureus* can also colonise the throat, an antiseptic throat gargle (e.g. chlorhexidine 0.2% solution, three times daily) is also recommended for one week.

Nose Decolonisation

- Apply either fusidic acid or mupirocin antibiotic ointment inside each nostril with a cotton bud or finger, twice daily, for five days. Sometimes we need to take a swab from inside the nose to see which ointment the bacteria is sensitive to.

Household Items Decolonisation

- Clothing, towels, facecloths, sheets and other linen in the household should be washed then dried on a hot cycle in a clothes dryer, or dried then ironed, at least twice within the one week decolonisation period.
- Ideally, the household should also replace toothbrushes, razors, roll-on deodorants and skin products.
- Hair brushes, combs, nail files, nail clippers can be washed in hot water or a dishwasher.
- Surfaces that are touched frequently, such as door handles, toilet seats and taps, should be wiped daily, using a disinfectant, e.g. alcohol wipes, bleach.
- Soft furnishings that cannot easily be cleaned, e.g. couches and arm chairs, can be covered in a sheet or blanket that is regularly washed.
- Bleach baths or antiseptic washing can be carried out intermittently after the initial decolonisation period, to help prevent recurrence of infection.