

Staphylococcus Aureus Bacteraemia (SAB)

Infection Prevention and Control

Fact Sheet for patients and carers

? What is Staphylococcus Aureus?

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacterium (germ) that is commonly found on human skin and lining of the nose without causing any harm. However it can cause infection, particularly if there is an opportunity for the bacteria to enter the body, for example through broken skin, a wound or an intravenous device (line) e.g. PVC.

? What is Staphylococcus Aureus Bacteraemia (SAB)?

If the bacteria enter the body it can cause a bacteraemia (blood stream infection) which is called a **Staphylococcus aureus bacteremia** (SAB). Bacteraemia can occur, if you have a soft tissue infection, or an intravenous device (line) e.g. PVC in place or a wound or break on your skin.

? What are the symptoms of a SAB?

The symptoms of a SAB may include a high temperature, a fast pulse, a painful swollen area of skin or a leaking wound. You should tell the staff caring for you if any of these symptoms develop.

? How did I get a SAB?

A SAB can be triggered by an infection in any part of the body. Usually, your immune system keeps an infection in one place which is called localised infection. If your immune system is weak or an infection is particularly severe, it can quickly spread through the blood into other parts of the body.

? How is a SAB treated?

We can treat SAB with antibiotics which you will need to take for a minimum of 2 weeks. We need to give you the antibiotics directly into your bloodstream via an intravenous device (drip), therefore you will usually need to stay in hospital for this. If the doctor feels that you are well enough there may be an option to go home and attend the hospital every day to receive your antibiotics.

? What happens if you are diagnosed with a SAB while in hospital?

Your doctor may decide to carry out further tests such as an x-ray or scan and further blood tests. We will discuss these with you.

? What about visitors? Are friends and family at risk?

Your family and friends can continue to visit you and they are advised to wash their hands or use the alcohol based hand rub on entering and leaving your room or bed.

? What happens when I go home?

While the treatment you receive in hospital normally cures the infection, there is a small risk that the infection can return. It is important that you see your GP if you have any of the following

- Fever, chills or shakes
- Unusual back pain
- Shortness of breath
- Headache, dizziness, nausea and, or vomiting

For more information you or your carer can speak to the nurse looking after you.