

Cystic fibrosis (CF) and staphylococcus aureus infections: information for families

Staphylococcus aureus (known as staph) is a bacterium that is quite common in the general population. If someone with cystic fibrosis (CF) develops a staph infection, the bacteria may grow and spread quickly, causing more serious problems. This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) explains about staph infections and how we will manage them when your child has CF. An Easy Read information sheet is included for your child.

Staphylococcus aureus (staph) is a bacterium or germ that is commonly found on our skin or in our upper respiratory tract (windpipe).

The bacteria can pass from person to person by skin contact but also in droplet form released when someone sneezes or coughs.

Reducing the spread

It can be difficult to prevent staph infections as many people have this bacteria on their skin but there are things you can do to reduce the chances of getting the infection.

- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly.
- Keep your skin clean by having a bath or shower every day.
- Carry disposable tissues with you to blow your nose or cover your cough. Throw the used tissue in the bin – do not carry it around with you.
- Always wash your hands (or use hand sanitiser gel) after you have coughed or sneezed. This is as well as throughout the

day, before you eat and after you have used the toilet.

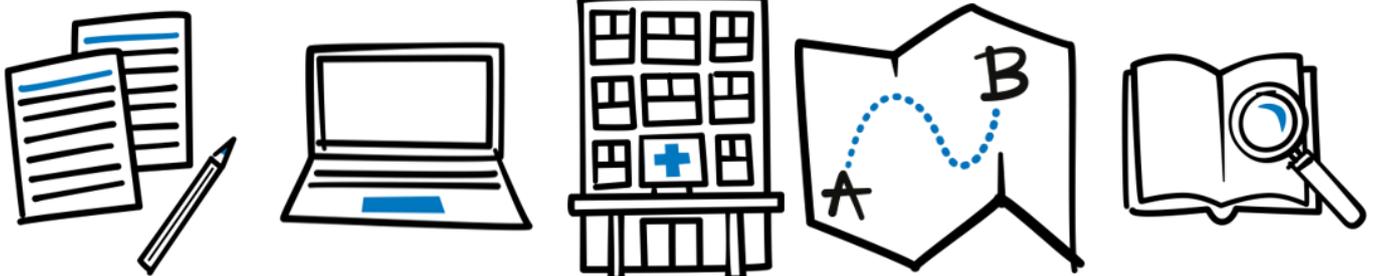
Staph infections in CF

As staph infections may be more serious in children and young people with CF, your child will usually be tested routinely for the bacterium during clinic visits and home visits. If your child has a cough, you can also ask the team to check for infection. There are various ways staph infection can be tested:

- Cough swab
- Sputum sample

The team will explain which is the most suitable for your child at the time. If your child needs to give a sample, we will coordinate this for you, either arranging a home visit from our CF nurses, sending you a testing kit to post back to us or asking your community nurses to take the sample.

Staph bacteria on the skin is usually checked by taking a swab (which looks like a large cotton bud) of various parts of the body, particularly areas that are moist and damp so more likely to carry the



bacteria. Routine swabs may also be taken before someone is admitted to hospital.

Broncho-alveolar lavage (BAL) is another way of taking a mucus sample from lower down in the respiratory system and is not suitable for everyone. It may be suggested if your child is due to have another procedure under anaesthetic.

Getting the results

It can take up to a week to test the sample in our laboratories – it takes this long for the bacterium to grow and be identified.

If the sample is negative for staph infection, you will not need to do anything else. Of course, if your child develops a cough or any other symptoms that concern you, please contact the CF team as you usually do.

If the sample is positive for staph infection, we will talk to you about how it can be managed and treated.

Treating staph infection

In the UK, the standard treatment for staph infections is an oral antibiotic called flucloxacillin, usually as a 14 day course of liquid or tablets. More information about flucloxacillin is available on the Medicines for Children website at www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk.

If your child is allergic to penicillin (including flucloxacillin), doctors will identify a suitable alternative.

If your child has several confirmed staph infections over a year, we may think about giving them preventative antibiotics (prophylaxis) to help manage symptoms.

Further information and support

Call the CF office on 020 7762 6714 from Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm – we will pass your query onto the most appropriate member of the team. Out of hours and at weekends, call Leopard Ward on 020 7829 8813.

If your query is not urgent, you can also email the team at CysticFibrosisUnit.Query@gosh.nhs.uk or contact them through MyGOSH once you have signed up for access. Further details are on our website at www.gosh.nhs.uk/your-hospital-visit/mygosh

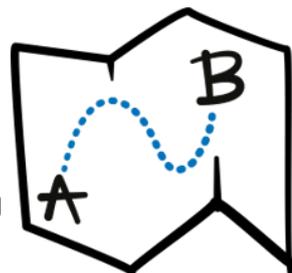
CF and staph infections



Staph is a bug that lives on our skin and in our lungs. In most people, it doesn't usually cause any problems.



It can go from one person to another by touching someone's skin. It also spreads when a person sneezes or coughs out droplets. You can stop the bug going from person to person by:





Washing your hands with soap and water regularly.



Use hand sanitiser if you cannot use soap and water.



Using a tissue to catch a sneeze or cover a cough.



If you don't have any tissues, use your sleeve instead.



Try not to touch your face – eyes, nose and mouth – if you haven't washed your hands.



People with CF are more likely to have staph infections. We usually test at every clinic appointment or home visit.



We will use a swab like a large cotton bud and ask you to cough on to it. We may also tickle the inside of your nose with another swab if needed.



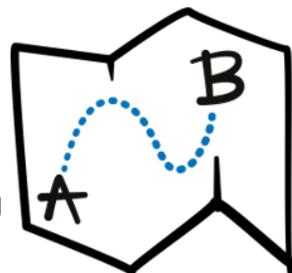
We might ask you for a sputum (mucus) sample. We will ask you to cough and then spit any mucus into a collecting pot.

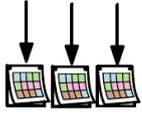


The cough swab and sputum sample will be checked in our labs.



If you have a staph infection, we will contact you. You may need some medicine to take for 14 days.





If you have lots of infections, we may give you some medicine to take every day to help reduce the number of coughs you have.



Please ask us if you have any questions.

