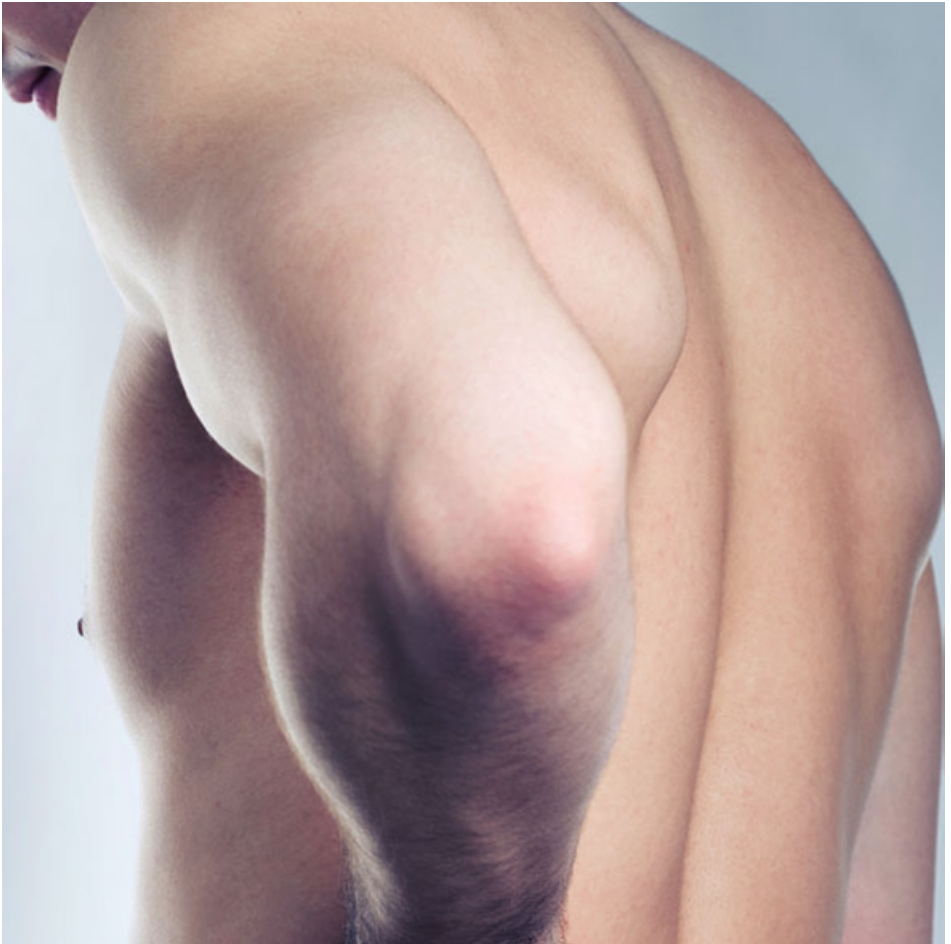


Boils and Skin Infections

Information for the public



This leaflet contains information about boils and skin infections
– what they are and how they affect people.

What causes boils and other skin infections?

Bacteria (germs) which live on our skin and in our noses are the usual cause of skin infections.

What is a boil?

A boil is an infected part of the skin containing pus, usually starting around the root of a hair.

Other skin infections

The bacteria that cause boils can also cause other infections:

Impetigo – this looks like blisters filled with pus, which form yellow crusts.

Cellulitis – an area of skin which is hot, painful, red and swollen.

What should I do if I think I have a boil or skin infection?

Discuss this with your doctor – in some cases treatment may be needed. Keep the area around a boil or skin infection clean with soap and water.

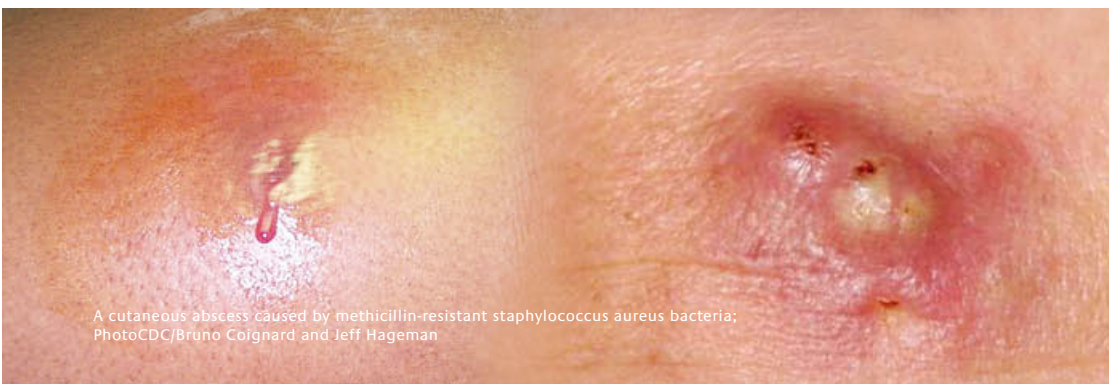
Cover a boil or skin infection with a clean, dry dressing - this is particularly important if it is oozing pus or liquid.

If you work as a carer or healthcare worker, you should stay away from work until your boil or skin infection has healed – you could spread the infection to others.

Do not visit saunas, gyms or swimming baths until your skin has healed.

Preventing skin infections

- Take regular baths or showers – keeping the skin clean and dry helps to prevent boils.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water.
- Use disposable tissues to blow your nose and try to avoid picking your nose.
- Change your clothes and underclothes regularly.
- Wash sports clothes after use each time.
- Do not share towels, razors or other personal items.
- In saunas and gyms sit on a clean towel and wash after use.



A cutaneous abscess caused by methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus bacteria;
PhotoCDC/Bruno Coignard and Jeff Hageman



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