Preventing infections caused by Pseudomonas

Parent/carer information leaflet

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What is Pseudomonas?

Pseudomonas is the name given to a bacterium (sometimes called a bug or germ), that is commonly found in soil and water. Pseudomonas rarely causes infection in people who are healthy. It sometimes causes infection in people who are already unwell or who do not have a strong or fully developed immune system.

What kind of infections does Pseudomonas cause?

Pseudomonas may cause...

- Respiratory/chest infections
- Urinary tract/urine infections
- Wound infections
- Infections of the blood

The Pseudomonas bacterium is a relatively common cause of healthcare associated infections (HCAIs).
What can be done to treat these infections/stop infants from getting them?

When an infant in hospital has signs of infection (or gets an infection), a sample is usually collected and sent for testing. The sample may be of urine, blood, lung or other secretions. The test results help hospital staff to decide how to treat the infection. Infections caused by Pseudomonas are treated using an appropriate antibiotic.

Pseudomonas may also be found on the skin of some infants and not necessarily cause infection. This is known as colonisation. Colonisation of Pseudomonas on the skin does not usually require treatment and each case will be assessed by the Doctors on NICU.

If more than one infant gets an infection caused by Pseudomonas bacteria in a hospital ward or unit, a risk assessment is generally completed. Samples of commonly used water/sinks and medical equipment may be collected and tested.
The reason that samples may be collected in these areas is because Pseudomonas likes to grow in moist environments.

It may be necessary to keep infants who have Pseudomonas on their skin or who have developed a Pseudomonas infection in an area where their contact with other infants is limited. This is to ensure that the infection is not spread between infants.

**The importance of hand hygiene**

Hand hygiene is an important way of preventing and controlling Pseudomonas infection. Hand washing should be carried out before and after contact with the infant and their environment.

Hands should be wet before applying liquid soap. The soap should be rubbed vigorously into all areas to produce suds/lather. The hands should be rinsed under running water and dried thoroughly.
It is really important to dry your hands properly using the disposable paper towels provided. Paper towels should be disposed of in the foot operated pedal bins provided.

Alcohol hand-rubs should also be used after hand washing with soap and water. After applying the alcohol hand-rub, hands should be rubbed together, covering all areas, until the hands are dry. The application of the alcohol hand-rub will ensure that should there be any trace of Pseudomonas in the water used for hand washing is eradicated. Nursing staff will show you how to use hand-rubs properly.

If you have any concerns, please speak to a member of the NICU staff.
If you require further advice / information, please ask NICU staff to contact NBT Infection Prevention and Control Team.

Contact details:

North Bristol Trust
Infection Prevention and Control Team:
0117 323 3654

“ Infection prevention and control is everyone’s business ”