

## Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment of *Mycobacterium abscessus*

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### DESCRIPTION

*Mycobacterium abscessus* is a tuberculosis and Hansen's disease-related bacterium (Leprosy). It is a type of mycobacterium found in the environment, such as water, soil, and dust. It has been shown to contaminate medications and products, including medical devices. *Mycobacterium abscessus* can cause a wide range of infections. In healthcare settings, this bacterium typically causes infections of the skin and soft tissues beneath the skin. It is also a source of serious lung infections in people suffering from chronic lung diseases such as cystic fibrosis. *Mycobacterium abscessus* infection can occur in people who have open wounds or who receive injections without proper skin disinfection. In rare cases, individuals with underlying respiratory conditions or compromised immune systems are at risk of lung infection. *Mycobacterium abscessus* is a bacterium that is related to tuberculosis and leprosy in a distant way.

### Symptoms

Skin infected with *Mycobacterium abscessus* are often red, warm, tender to the touch, swollen, and/or painful. Infected areas can develop boils and pus-filled vesicles. *Mycobacterium abscessus* manifests itself in other ways. An abscess infection causes fever, chills, muscle aches, and a general feeling of illness. A medical professional should assess the infection to determine whether it is caused by *Mycobacterium abscessus*.

### Diagnosis

To make a definitive diagnosis, the organism must be cultured from the infection site or, in severe cases, from a blood culture.

To make a diagnosis, this bacterium is grown in the laboratory from a sample of pus or a biopsy of the infected area. When the infection is severe, the bacterium can be isolated and found in a blood sample. In order to make the diagnosis, your healthcare provider will need to collect a sample from the infected area and/or blood and send it to a laboratory for identification. People who have evidence of infection at a site where they received procedures, such as surgery or injections, must notify

their doctors immediately so that the necessary tests can be performed.

### Transmission

*Mycobacterium abscessus* can spread in a variety of ways. *Mycobacterium abscessus* infection is typically caused by contaminated injections or invasive medical procedures that use contaminated equipment or material. Infection can also occur as a result of an unintentional injury with soil contamination. It is extremely unlikely that transmission will occur from person to person.

### Prevention

Anyone who comes into contact with the infected area should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water. Patients should follow all instructions after any surgery or medical procedure. Procedures or injections should not be administered to unlicensed individuals.

### Treatment

*Mycobacterium abscessus* infections are treated by draining pus collections or removing infected tissue and administering the appropriate antibiotic combination for an extended period of time. Antibiotics used to treat skin infections usually do not help with this bacterium's infection. Antibiotic resistance testing can help doctors determine the best treatment for each patient.

### CONCLUSION

Because of differences in antibiotic susceptibility profiles and treatment outcomes, subspecies identification is required differentiation is now possible to the development of new microbiological and molecular techniques. Because macrolides are the mainstay of therapy, it is necessary to identify inducible resistance strains prior to starting treatment. MABC is a multidrug-resistant pathogen, and given the limited therapeutic options available, resistance is likely to continue.

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