P s e u d o m o n a s

Pseudomonas is a common type of bacteria which can cause lung infections. It mainly affects those who have a pre-existing lung condition or who have problems with their immune system.

**Where does Pseudomonas come from?**

Pseudomonas can be found in many different places such as **plants, soil, & stagnant water.** Jacuzzis, hot tubs, & flower water are also common places for Pseudomonas to grow – warm, moist environments allow the bacteria to thrive.

**How can we avoid a Pseudomonas infection?**

The most important thing that you can do is to follow **good hygiene rules!**

This includes:

* Regularly washing your hands with soap & water
* Always coughing/sneezing into a tissue
* Cleaning contaminated surfaces with a bleach-based cleaner
* Washing contaminated clothes & sheets separately & at a high temperature

As mentioned prior, making sure you **finish any prescribed treatments** to ensure an infection does not become resistant & persist is a great way to avoid future infections. If you smoke, **stopping smoking** can help you to avoid Pseudomonas as smoking damages your lung’s immune defences.

**How is an infection treated?**

An infection can usually be treated effectively with the **use of antibiotics**, but sometimes it can be tricky to eradicate the infection completely. This is because Pseudomonas is only sensitive to a particular type of antibiotic (one in this group being Ciprofloxacin).

If an infection persists then **IV antibiotics** could also be a more effective way to treat Pseudomonas. Whatever the method of antibiotic used, it’s really important to **finish** the course of treatment – as this helps to prevent the bacteria becoming resistant to the antibiotic.

**How is an infection diagnosed?**

A common way to diagnose a Pseudomonas infection is through a **sputum sample** – this would be taken from the lungs.

**Who is at risk of infection?**

Pseudomonas **rarely causes problems in those with healthy lungs.** People more likely to contract infection are those with long term health conditions such as:

* Cystic Fibrosis (CF)
* Bronchiectasis
* COPD

People with a **weaker immune system** are also at higher risk. Pregnant women are also more susceptible to the infection due to hormone changes affecting their immune system.

**How do you get Pseudomonas?**

Pseudomonas can live on hands contaminated with sputum for up to **two & a half hours** – the bacteria can thus be spread to another person by coughing without covering your mouth, **not washing your hands thoroughly,** or touching someone else. Any surface that has not been properly cleaned (that has come into contact with the bacteria) could further the spread.

**What infections does Pseudomonas cause?**

Pseudomonas bacteria is not just limited to causing lung infections, it can also cause:

* Pneumonia
* Urinary tract infections
* Septicaemia
* Wound infections
* Gastro-intestinal system infections

Some people with existing lung conditions (like CF for instance) may carry Pseudomonas in their lungs without it causing infection – this means Pseudomonas may not always have to be treated.