

Health and Safety Bulletin (April 2026)

Burkholderia Stabilis Infection Risk Linked to Non-Sterile Alcohol-Free Wipes in First Aid Kits

UKHSA has issued an updated warning regarding an ongoing outbreak of *Burkholderia Stabilis* infections linked to the use of non-sterile alcohol-free cleansing wipes. There have been 59 confirmed cases identified in the UK, including serious infections and one death attributed to this outbreak.

Burkholderia Stabilis is a bacterium that can cause infection, particularly in vulnerable individuals. It does not spread person to person, but infection can occur through contaminated products used on the skin or medical devices.

How Does This Occur?

Certain non-sterile alcohol-free wipes used for:

- Skin cleansing
- Wound cleansing
- Cleaning around medical devices

When these wipes are used on broken skin or wounds the bacteria can enter the body and cause infection.

Who Is Most at Risk?

The following groups are at highest risk:

- Immunocompromised individuals
- People with underlying conditions such as cystic fibrosis
- Patients managed at home with intravascular devices (e.g. PICC lines, central lines)

However, anyone using contaminated wipes on broken skin may be at risk.

Products Known to Be Affected

The following wipes were found to be contaminated and **must not be used**:

- ValueAid Alcohol Free Cleansing Wipes
- Microsafe Moist Wipe Alcohol Free
- Steroplast Sterowipe Alcohol Free Cleansing Wipes

Additionally:

- Reliwipe Alcohol Free Cleansing Wipes were contaminated with a different *Burkholderia* strain (not linked to outbreak cases)

Although these products have been withdrawn from sale, they may still be present in first aid kits.

What Needs to Be Done Now?

- Check all first aid kits for affected wipes.
- If found:
 - Stop using them immediately
 - Dispose of them in normal household waste
- Only use wipes clearly marked “sterile” on wounds or broken skin.

