



Health Awareness

Prevention Is Key To Stopping Spread Of MRSA And Other Staph Infections

(NAPSA)—An infection commonly mistaken as a spider bite, ingrown hair or pimple, and previously found almost exclusively in hospitals, is now becoming a problem in communities nationwide, spreading among teammates, students, family and friends.

A type of staph infection, it's commonly known as MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), and it's growing at an alarming rate.

"MRSA germs are commonly carried on the skin of healthy people and spread either through direct physical contact or by contaminating other objects such as towels, clothes, sports equipment, whirlpools and saunas," says Carolyn Twomey, RN, vice president of clinical and technical affairs, Molnlycke Health Care US, LCC, "and can live on objects for days."

Skin areas infected with MRSA usually take on the appearance of spider bites, ingrown hairs or pimples, but can quickly develop into inflamed and painful boils or abscesses. In the most extreme cases, MRSA can cause bone infections or bacterial blood poisoning, which may result in amputations or even death.

An important key to the prevention of MRSA is keeping hands clean to avoid cross contamination. That means washing hands at least three times per day or whenever they are visibly soiled—always using an antimicrobial, antiseptic skin cleanser such as Hibiclens®, available from Molnlycke Health Care. Washing should not only include the hands, but should also involve the forearms above the elbow, before and after physical activity, where contamination is likely. And, if water is not readily accessible, alcohol rubs and antiseptics are a great way to supple-



Keeping hands clean can protect you from a dangerous strain of staph infection that has become increasingly prevalent.

ment personal hygiene throughout the day.

Here are more tips to help prevent the spread of MRSA among the general population:

- Shower immediately after potentially contaminating activity, contact sports or using common gear or equipment. Wash in water as hot as you can safely tolerate and use an antimicrobial cleanser.

- Wash all clothes, uniforms, protective pads, towels, sheets and the like in hot water using a solution of 1:100 of household bleach to water. Make sure all fabrics completely dry, using the "hot" setting on the dryer.

- Disinfect gear, equipment, mats and other surfaces on a regular basis with a bleach or other antibacterial solution that is effective against MRSA.

- Refrain from sharing towels and toiletries. Use a clean towel after bathing, showering or swimming and be responsible for your own personal hygiene items, such as soap and razors.

- Keep wounds and lesions covered with clean, dry bandages until they heal. Regularly clean surface wounds with an antimicrobial cleanser and dispose of used bandages properly.

For more information, visit www.hibigeebies.com.