

SAFETY / OSHA UPDATE

A Newsletter from High Safety Consulting Services, Ltd.

Information on Safety & Health in Your Workplace



Special Issue: The “Bugs” Are Loose!



With the recent outbreaks of Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) there have been some concerns about exposure to this pathogen in various settings. MRSA, which used to primarily affect patients in healthcare facilities, has spread to the community outside of hospitals and healthcare facilities.

Whenever the public health of students is in question, it brings heightened concerns. Recently there have been a number of cases of MRSA reported in school districts in Pennsylvania. I recently discussed this topic with my teen-age daughter and sons. We discussed how they might come in contact with environmental surfaces. We identified weight room equipment, gymnasium mats, athletic equipment (including heart rate monitors which are placed directly on the skin) and of course locker and bathroom facilities. Other environmental surfaces exist but those that are likely to contact body fluids seem to be the greatest risk. It is important the school officials evaluate the effectiveness of the disinfecting procedures for these types of items.

This Community-Associated MRSA is transmitted when the skin contacts contaminated surfaces. While we have yet to see a case, consider the potential for MRSA in the workplace setting as well. Manufacturing settings that provide locker rooms for workers could also harbor MRSA or other pathogens, if they are not properly disinfected. This is also a good time to have a discussion about disinfection of PPE or other workplace items that could be used resulting in significant skin contact.

To prevent the spread of MRSA, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend practicing good hygiene consisting of:

- Washing hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol based sanitizer.
- Keeping cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

If a MRSA case is suspected in any of your facilities or if you would simply like to confirm that this pathogen is not present, High Safety Consulting can assist you by performing the necessary environmental testing. The two main types of sampling for MRSA include:

- Surface sampling – areas suspected of possible contamination.
- Bulk sampling – items suspected of possible contamination.

For cleaning purposes High Safety distributes Sporidicin® Brand Disinfectant Solution. Sporidicin Disinfectant (EPA #8383-3) is an EPA registered for MRSA decontamination. This alcohol-free product is compatible with plastics, wood, glass and metals and is non-staining, non-abrasive and non-corrosive. It is ready-to-use (no dilution required) in a one-gallon jug or 22-oz spray bottle.

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High Safety also has staff members trained in Risk Communication who can assist in communicating environmental testing results to staff and addressing their concerns. We need to keep in mind that the relative risk of this disease is small and that prudent steps to prevent risk exposures are appropriate -- wide-spread over-reactions are not.

NOTE: All of our prior newsletters are archived on our website under the "Contact Us" Tab



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