



Press Release

For Immediate Release
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CDC Launches Campaign to Fight Drug-Resistant Germ *New Effort Teaches Parents How to Protect Children from MRSA*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today launched a national campaign to tell parents how to keep their children safe from skin infections caused by the potentially dangerous bacteria methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

MRSA, a type of staph bacteria that is resistant to certain antibiotics, has been in the news because it can cause severe infections in health care settings, such as hospitals. But parents may not be aware that it can also cause skin infections in otherwise healthy people who haven't recently been hospitalized.

The National MRSA Education Initiative is aimed at highlighting specific actions parents can take to protect themselves and their families. CDC estimates that Americans visit doctors more than 12 million times per year for skin infections typical of those caused by staph bacteria. In some areas of the country, more than half of the skin infections are MRSA.

The MRSA initiative will reach out to parents and health care providers through Web sites, fact sheets, brochures, posters, radio and print public service announcements, web banners, mom blogging sites, and mainstream media interviews. Information will also be shared through community and school groups including parent-teacher associations, faith-based organizations, professional organizations and national conferences on health.

"Well-informed parents are a child's best defense against MRSA and other skin infections," said Dr. Rachel Gorwitz, a pediatrician and medical epidemiologist with CDC's Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion. "Recognizing the signs and receiving treatment in the early stages of a skin infection reduces the chances of the infection becoming severe or spreading."

MRSA is spread by having direct contact with another person's infection, sharing personal items such as towels or razors that have touched infected skin, or by touching surfaces contaminated with MRSA.

To prevent MRSA, parents can teach their children about the signs and symptoms of MRSA skin infections, help children keep their cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage and encourage good hand washing and general hygiene.

Most staph skin infections, including those caused by MRSA, appear as a bump or infected area on the skin that may be red, swollen, painful, warm to the touch or containing pus or other drainage. These signs may also be accompanied by a fever. It's especially important to contact a doctor if anyone in your family has a skin infection and a fever.

The campaign was developed with support from the CDC Foundation through an educational grant from Pfizer Inc. For more information, please call 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit www.cdc.gov/MRSA.

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