

Clean Hands Can Help Prevent Infection

(NAPS)—There's good news for those concerned about the threat posed by infections caused by common bacteria. There are simple precautions—such as washing hands — that can help reduce that risk.

Infections caused by bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics have emerged as one of the major challenges in health care. One of the most serious of these is a dangerous type of staph infection called MRSA (or methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus) which is increasingly affecting otherwise healthy adults and children.

The number of "community associated" MRSA infections is growing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 94,360 people developed a serious MRSA infection in 2005.

The CDC notes that certain conditions increase the risk of transmitting staph infections like MRSA. These factors, referred to as the 5 C's, are Crowding, frequent skin-to-skin Contact, Compromised skin (i.e., cuts or abrasions), Contaminated items and surfaces, and lack of Cleanliness. Anecdotal reports suggest that recurrent MRSA skin infections and clustering of infections within a household are relatively common occurrences.

Education is a critical component of managing MRSA cases. Doctors and pharmacists should educate patients and family members on simple methods to limit the spread of infection in their household. Povidone-iodine, for example, which is the active ingredient in Betadine® Surgical Scrub and Skin Cleanser products, reduces bacteria on the skin that potentially can cause skin infections.

As concerns about MRSA continue to mount, pharmaceutical company Purdue Products L.P. has developed and supported the Clean Hands Save Lives® program to provide education and materials that help improve infection control.

To learn more about Betadine® antiseptic products and the Clean Hands Save Lives® campaign visit www.betadine.com.