

## PSU Nursing students warn of new ‘super bug’

As if bird flu, meningitis, West Nile Virus and SAARS weren't enough, American university students are now being warned to be on guard against an emerging new health threat, Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). Members of Pittsburg State University's Graduate Student Nurses Organization (GSNO) will launch an education campaign about MRSA on campus next week. They will share information on what students can do to protect themselves from this new super bug, which in some extreme cases have even developed into what is commonly called a "flesh-eating" infection.

Staphylococcus bacteria are common in the environment, according to the Center for Disease Control. Healthy humans frequently have the bacteria on their skin and in their nostrils, but are protected by their skin and the body's natural defenses. Staphylococcus is responsible for most minor skin infections, such as pimples and boils, which often do not require any medical treatment. In the past, those infections that did require treatment, responded well to penicillin and related drugs.

All that began to change a few years ago with the evolution of a new strain of staph that was resistant to the penicillin drug family. Seen initially in hospitals, nursing homes and other communal living groups, MRSA recently made the jump to the community.

Several cases of MRSA among young, healthy athletes have helped give the issue a higher public profile. One such athlete was Ricky Lannetti, the leading receiver for the NCAA D-III Lycoming College Warriors. Lannetti and the Warriors were preparing to play Bridgewater, Va., in 2003 D-III playoffs when he was admitted to a local hospital with a blood infection. Lannetti died within hours, a victim of MRSA.

MRSA has become a concern for high school and college athletic departments, where players may share towels, locker rooms and equipment. Earlier this year, KU basketball player Christian Moody suffered a floor burn on his left knee at Texas Tech. The resulting infection turned out to be MRSA, but because of prompt treatment, Moody recovered.

Editors/Directors - For information, contact the PSU Department of Nursing at 620-235-4431.

**(More)**

## **PG. 2 - MRSA**

Although MRSA is resistant to penicillin and related drugs, it can usually be treated with an antibiotic called vancomycin. Recently, however, a few strains of *Staphylococcus aureus* have even developed some degree of resistance to vancomycin.

At PSU, the graduate Nursing students will share simple recommendations from the CDC about how to avoid MRSA. Generally, the recommendation is to practice good hygiene:

1. Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

For more information, please visit the PSU Graduate Student Nurses Organization table on the first floor of the Overman Student Center. The table will be staffed from 1-3 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 8, and from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Nov. 9-11.

You may also visit the Center for Disease Control Web site at: [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/aresist/mrsa.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/aresist/mrsa.htm) or [MRSAINFECTION.org](http://MRSAINFECTION.org) at: [www.mrsainfection.org](http://www.mrsainfection.org).

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