

## The Connection™ Marvin's View

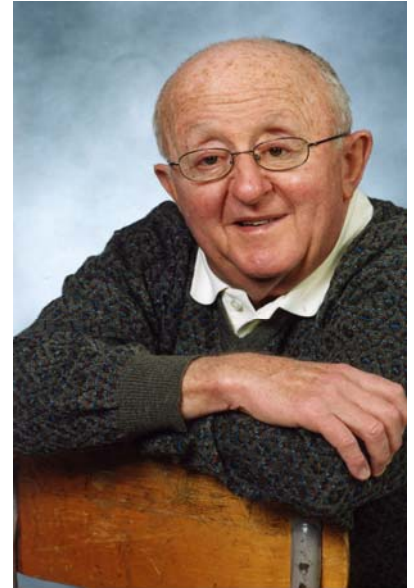
July 6, 2007

### MRSA

#### First Protect Yourself, Then Your Clients

No I did not get cosmetic surgery. The photo is Hal Temkin, our Infection Control consultant. There was so much response to our Connection on MRSA last week I asked Hal to bring us up to date on the subject.

Hal retired several years ago after a long and distinguished career with PortionPac. He helped craft our germicidal cleaning program that influenced the entire industry about the proper and safe use of Germicides. Obviously a disease like MRSA that is causing thousands of deaths presents an important time to get Hal's perspective.



Hal Temkin

So here is Hal's first Connection on the subject.

"Last week when I received a bulletin from the Association for Practitioners in Infection Control ([APIC](#)) about the rising prevalence of MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) and then the subsequent stories in the [Chicago Tribune](#) and the [Wall Street Journal](#), my thoughts turned to concern for our Housekeeping/Janitorial personnel who clean hospitals, prisons, schools, and other facilities where MRSA can be transmitted.

#### Background Information

Staph are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. They can become troublesome when they enter a body through open cuts and scrapes on the skin. MRSA is a type of "super-bug" Staph infection that can resist treatment from antibiotics like Methicillin, Oxacillin and others.

Staph infections, including MRSA, can be spread among people having close contact with infected people. MRSA is almost always spread by skin-to-skin contact--NOT through the air. Spread may also occur by touching contaminated objects (door handles, push plates, hand railings, sports equipment, etc.) and then transferring that infection to yourself by touching your nose, mouth, eyes or broken skin.

**Protecting yourself and doing the job right is mostly a matter of common sense. Here are some points that you might want to review with your staff.**

#### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

With help from Ms. Sharon Phillips, R.N., MBA we offer the following suggestions. But check with your medical staff and local health department officers.

Since Housekeeping/Environmental Services workers always use their hands in conducting their work, there are a number of suggestions that everyone should follow to avoid getting Staph or other infections:

1.) Practice good hand hygiene.

- Wash your hands thoroughly throughout the day with soap and water--especially before eating and before leaving work to go home--and encourage others to do the same.
- Keep your hands away from your face, nose, eyes and mouth.

2.) If possible, wear gloves while doing your work-- especially when contact with blood, non-intact skin, dirty clothing or bed linens is anticipated. Change gloves between contacts and wash hands each time gloves are removed.

3.) Keep natural nail tips less than 1/4" long and avoid artificial fingernails as these tend to trap bacteria.

- 4.) Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- 5.) Avoid sharing personal items such as towels and razors.
- 6.) If you know that MRSA is prevalent in your facility, do not wear your work clothes home.
- 7.) If you launder your own uniform, use hot water and detergent and dry on the hottest setting.

**HOW TO PROTECT MY CUSTOMERS FROM MRSA TRANSMISSION.**

- 1) If you know that MRSA is prevalent in your facility, clean high contact surfaces with an EPA Registered Germicidal Detergent that has the **specific ability to kill MRSA**. Dilute and use that germicide accurately.
- 2) Pay special attention to cleaning frequently-touched surfaces (door handles, push plates, hand railings, telephones and other equipment) that may have been contaminated by someone who is already infected.

**If you have any specific questions, let me know and we will be sending more on the subject next week."**

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