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HOURS URGENT CARE

Staph—An Unwelcome Summertime Guest

As the summer heat ramps-up, so do the effects of MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus). This bacteria causes abscesses and cellulitis year-round but as the temperature rises, especially coupled with the humidity in South Louisiana, so does the opportunity for these infections.

This once-rare drug-resistant bacteria now causes most skin infections treated in ERs and Urgent Care Centers—and many of us have it living unnoticed in our nostrils!

MRSA used to be most prevalent among healthcare workers, homeless populations, prison settings, nursing homes, day care centers and other high density areas where hygiene could be compromised. In recent years, however, we have seen outbreaks in the workplace, in schools and among sports teams.

Many patients with these infections present to the doctor thinking they had been bitten by a spider. Usually they are mistaken, and instead have a MRSA infection. These red painful infections can progress to abscesses (boils) which usually need to be opened, drained, and sometimes packed. The packing may need to be replaced and re-packed several times. Patients are also given antibiotic pills and ointments to fully heal the infection.

Staph infections must be taken seriously. If the infection enters the blood stream, it can cause heart damage, limb loss and even death.

You can help prevent staph infections by:

- encouraging regular hand washing
- keeping your skin clean with a daily bath
- keeping areas that have been cut clean or covered
- not sharing towels with anyone who has an open wound
- See a doctor if you think you have an infection. ▶

As seen in

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