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THIS IS A RE-PRINT OF A PREVIOUS ARTICLE I DID IN JAN - 07. GIVEN MY MAIN ARTICLE THIS MONTH, AND THE CURRENT MEDIA FRENZY, IT IS VERY TIMELY.

John

Special Message:

"Staph" Infections

This is a general term applied to a variety of infections caused by the bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus* (*S. aureus*), and if you're in the cleaning products business, it's one that you need to know, and know well.

This particular type of infection has become more and more serious of late as strains of the bacteria have become highly resistant to antibiotics, always (and still) the medical establishment's first answer to these easily recognizable infections.

First let me say that there are two levels of staph problem, those in health care institutions, (which can be life threatening) and those elsewhere - which are normally just a nuisance - but can also be serious. There is not enough room here to address the medical institution's special problems, but I do want to talk about those pertaining to the rest of us.

S. aureus is found everywhere. It can survive in extreme temperatures, and is tolerant of various environments, "toxic" chemicals, lack of air, high/low air pressure, etc. Between 70-90% of all humans (and most animals including household pets) will carry *S. aureus* colonies somewhere on or in their bodies at any given time, with no ill effects. In other words, there is a host/parasite relationship between us and this common bacterium. Under normal circumstances, we are both tolerant of each other.

S. aureus is however, opportunistic. Normally held in check, under the proper circumstances, *S. aureus* becomes virulent, and like all other living things, will proliferate, and spread from host to host. Now we have a problem.

S. aureus' most common infectious manifestation is boils (large and small), and infections of the hair follicle. The infection draws white blood cells to the cite of infection forming pustules. When these little "pimples" erupt, millions of malicious bacteria are released to search out a new home.

Almost always, *S. aureus* is spread by direct contact. Let me give you an example that is common, and one that will be the subject of this month's second special bulletin: the athletic department locker room of your local high school.

Little Johnny (star defensive back of the Bulldogs) has been bothered lately by this reddish itchy spot looking like a large pimple, right between his legs. And to make matters worse, a couple more have sprung up right on his butt, making it uncomfortable to sit. Well, he thinks, it's probably just jock itch, so he shrugs it off.¹

It's the middle of football season, and after a hot sweaty workout on the football field, he's naturally glad to get back to the dressing room and change back into his street clothes. This stuff between his legs is really stinging from the sweat!

The Bulldogs have a typical locker room, with common lockers, benches to sit on, and showers with bar soap used for washing. The school supplies clean towels to the students to use after showering. There is a basket full of washed towels all ready to go, with an empty one right next to it where the kids can throw the dirty ones after they've been used. Nothing unusual here...

Johnny and the rest of the Bulldogs hit the locker room pumped up from the practice session and the "Rah Rah" speech the coach gave them. This weekend, they're playing the Wildcats, their main rivals - big game!

Johnny strips down naked, and sits on the bench to peel off his socks and the tape used to support his ankles. He gets up and heads for the showers.

The hot water feels great, Johnny lathers down with the soap supplied by the school, paying particular attention to the area between his legs (it's really been bothering him). "Hey Johnny, stop hogging the soap" yells one of his fellow Bulldogs. Johnny laughs, tosses him the soap, and rinses off.

Back out of the showers now, Johnny grabs a towel and dries off, he sits back down on the bench (in a different spot than before) and begins getting dressed. "Hey Johnny" someone yells out, "they're out of towels, you done with yours?" Johnny throws his fellow "Dog" his towel, and finishes getting dressed.

A few days later, six Bulldogs came down with staph infections, including of course, Johnny. Anybody surprised?

Good selling,

John White

PS: We'll talk more about the Bulldogs in my next special message.

First gets the business, second gets the leftovers, third gets thrown out - which one are you?

¹ Jock itch, athlete's foot, and ringworm are all forms of the same fungus. They are not bacterial infections, but can pave the way for their more pernicious brothers.