

Special Message:

Staph Infections II

In the story in my last special message about the Bulldogs' experience with *S. aureus* (reprinted below), three things become immediately apparent:

1. *S. aureus* (Staph germ) is spread by contact.
2. *S. aureus* is highly contagious, and can spread rapidly under the right circumstances.
3. Knowledge of how this disease spreads can help prevent outbreaks.

In the Bulldogs' case, Johnny was obviously suffering from an active staph infection (which he thought was jock itch). This brings up the primary means of prevention, that being education. First and foremost, schools are educational institutions. Health education classes teaching students about *S. aureus*, how it looks, feels, and spreads, and what to do if you think you have it, would have helped Johnny *and* the other five Bulldogs.

In the hundreds of locker rooms I've been in helping my distributor's sell their products, I have yet to see a poster describing staph infections, showing how they look, and explaining how it spreads. I think this is something cleaning chemical companies could easily provide given the growing problem this disease represents.¹ Maybe someone reading this will step up to the plate.

Reading the Bulldog's story, you will see that Johnny did four things to spread his infection:

- * Sitting naked on the changing bench in two different places (two exposures)
- * Sharing his soap in the shower (1 exposure, possibly more)
- * Sharing his towel with another student (1 exposure)

All four of these exposures could have been prevented with some simple procedures. Here are my suggestions:

1. Have a simple garden sprayer on hand, with a no-rinse germicidal cleaner (such as *INTEGRA*®'s Barrier II). Regularly spray down all changing benches and other possible areas of contact. Ask students to sit on a towel when using the bench (to provide a barrier), and turn the towel in for washing after using it.
2. Get rid of bar soap (a perfect place for bacteria to proliferate), and replace it with a dispensed liquid germicidal body wash. This is easy to set up in locker room shower stalls. Also, don't forget the sinks.

¹ Staph infections are a growing problem, both in the frequency of occurrence, and in the difficulty of curing the infection. Physicians often have to use several different antibiotics, and occasionally, the infection must be surgically removed along with surrounding flesh. This can be a very serious situation, and measures to prevent and contain staph infections are not to be taken lightly by authorities.

3. Have plenty of towels in inventory, and launder them properly (with a dispensed system like *INTEGRA*'s CVL 3 product system and Laundry San) so that students can have all the clean towels they need. Don't forget to sanitize the carts after each use with the garden sprayer and Barrier II.

There are many other things that can be done to help with this problem, I've just scratched the surface. I suggest that you look into setting up a locker room cleaning program complete with everything needed, including dispensers, wall charts, and in-service training manual for locker room attendants. So far, I've not seen such a program. Offer this to the athletic director, and you'll no doubt be pleasantly surprised at the reaction.

Helping stop Staph infections is a sales opportunity, and a service that is badly needed.

Good Selling,

John White

PS: *S. aureus* affects everyone, regardless of age, sex, or race. Although the "Bulldogs" story is fictitious, believe me, it's typical.

REPRINTED STORY ABOUT THE BULLDOGS

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.²

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

² 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.

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?