

## **Marketing Education Objective & Thought Process**

While working as a category marketing manager with Perrigo Diabetes Care I wrote this article for one of our major wholesale customers, Cardinal Health. They wanted an online educational piece for its pharmacist customers that would coincide with the introduction of a new antimicrobial wound care product our company had just launched.

Even though the intended audience is likely very proficient when it comes to reading medical scientific pieces, I aimed to keep my discussion on MRSA pretty simple (as it turns out, many in this audience did not know much about MRSA). I explained what it was, shared some data about its growth over the years, suggested best practices on how to avoid spreading it and then offered a product solution that could actually kill MRSA should it try to enter into an open wound. To also make it a bit more relatable, I included information from well-known celebrities who were, at that time, raising awareness about MRSA.

# MRSA Infections — Helping Customers Avoid Them

*What do Oprah Winfrey, NBA star Grant Hill and World Series champion Terry Francona have in common? Well, in recent months they have all been involved in raising public awareness about a strain of infectious bacteria that has too often proved deadly — a superbug called MRSA.*

Staph. Superbug. MRSA. These are buzzwords that have become more common in the media and affect hundreds of thousands of people each year in the U.S. But what do they mean? How can you help your customers protect themselves against these infectious bacteria?

Staphylococcus aureus, or staph, is a group of infectious bacteria that is commonly found on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. But it will take advantage of an opening or tear in the skin to enter the body, causing infection. Staph-related illness can range from mild, and requiring no treatment, to severe, which can be fatal! Staph is often the cause of skin infections in the U.S. and can usually appear as pimples or boils that may be red, swollen and contain pus or other drainage. A customer exhibiting any of these infections should see a healthcare professional. Staph can also cause serious wound infections, bloodstream infections and even pneumonia.

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA, is a type of Staphylococcus aureus that is resistant to certain antibiotics, making it more difficult to treat. Because of this characteristic it is often referred to as a "superbug," a term used to describe bacteria that are resistant to typical antibiotics that would be used to treat it. Initially, MRSA was seen only in hospitals or clinical settings. However, community-acquired MRSA (CA-MRSA) has become more prevalent among the general population, especially among children, athletes and people with compromised immune systems. 4% of all MRSA infections are now community-acquired.

About 90,000 Americans contract MRSA each year. Of those 90,000, 19,000 die — greater than the death toll for AIDS. One recent study suggests that from 1999 to 2006 MRSA incidents increased more than 90% in the U.S. In 2003, Grant Hill acquired a MRSA infection after ankle surgery. Terry Francona contracted a MRSA infection after routine surgery in 2002. Both are now spokespeople working to build awareness and understanding of the harmful bacteria. In 2009, Oprah and Dr. Mehmet Oz alerted her viewers to the phenomenon of superbugs, again signifying the growing importance of teaching the public about the dangers of staph infections and MRSA and how to protect against them.

## How can your customers prevent the spread of MRSA?

MRSA is spread primarily through close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts, scrapes or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions and poor hygiene. Transmission is often greater at gyms, lockerrooms and day care centers, to name a few. Share with your customers that they can prevent the spread of MRSA by practicing good hygiene:

- Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.

There are a number of wound care products widely available that resist and kill common and antibiotic-resistant forms of staph, serving as a preventive measure. For example, there are now antimicrobial bandages, gauze and non-stick pads that contain polyhexamethylene biguanide, or PHMB. PHMB is an antiseptic that is clinically proven effective against a broad spectrum of bacteria. It is non-toxic and commonly found in baby wipes, make-up and contact lens solutions. Here's how PHMB works to destroy the bacteria:

- It binds to the bacterial cell's phospholipid (outer) membrane
- The membrane disrupts, causing cytoplasm (cell matter) to leak out
- The cell's protective layer disrupts
- The bacterial cell collapses and dies

With awareness and education, your customers can actively prevent the spread of harmful MRSA infections and stay healthy — whether they are heading to the hospital or the health club.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)); Oprah.com; Covidien; Mayo Clinic.com; Journal of American Medical Association (2005); MedicineNet.com; MRSA Survivors Network ([www.mrsasurvivors.org](http://www.mrsasurvivors.org)); Klein F, Smith DJ, Jaramanarayan R. Community-acquired methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus in outpatients, United States, 1999–2006. Emerg Infect Dis (serial on the Internet). 2009 Dec [date cited]. Available from <http://www.cdc.gov/EID/content/15/12/1925.htm>

**NEW!** Show Staph Who's Boss

**12% OFF** all **all™** Adhesive Bandages and **Kendall™** Antimicrobial Bandages

**New! Kendall Telfa® Antimicrobial Adhesive Bandage is clinically proven to resist bacteria on and within each dressing and is proven effective against antibiotic-resistant staph bacteria, like MRSA and VRE.**

DESCRIPTION	CIN	UPC	%OFF
Assorted 24ea	4275442	694393130569	12%
1 X 1 Inch 24ea	4275434	694393130552	12%
2 X 3.75 Inch 10ea	4228946	694393128184	12%