

Skin Problems & Treatments Health Center

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MRSA Infections Can Be Flesh Eaters

Denver Doctors Note 5 Cases of Flesh-Eating MRSA in 2 Years

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WebMD Health News

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Oct. 12, 2006 -- Drug-resistant [staph](#) infections ([MRSA](#) infections) are on the rise and may, in rare cases, cause a potentially deadly flesh-eating disease called necrotizing fasciitis.

"Necrotizing fasciitis is still a rare disease, but MRSA no longer is," says Lisa Young, MD, in a news release from the Infectious Diseases Society of America.

Young works at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and Denver Health Medical Center.

She and her colleagues tracked cases of necrotizing fasciitis from January 2004 to February 2006 at the Denver Health Medical Center.

During that time, 30 patients were treated for necrotizing fasciitis, according to medical records.

Five of those 30 cases -- 17% -- were due to MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), Young's team notes.

Their findings were presented in Toronto at the 44th annual meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society of America.

But MRSA isn't the most common cause of necrotizing fasciitis, and most MRSA cases don't lead to the flesh-eating disease.

Second Study

Another MRSA study was also presented at the same conference.

That study had nothing to do with flesh-eating diseases. Instead, it focused on the common traits among 75 MRSA patients in Minnesota.

The researchers included Kathryn Como-Sabetti, MPH, of the Minnesota Department of Health and Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota.

Compared to patients with drug-sensitive staph infections, MRSA patients were more likely to have taken antibiotics in the six months before MRSA infection, the study shows.

The study doesn't show whether those antibiotics had been prescribed and used appropriately.

MRSA Prevention

Practicing good hygiene may make you less likely to get MRSA.

The CDC's web site includes these MRSA prevention tips:

Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.

Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.

Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

Further Reading:

- [How is MRSA diagnosed?](#)
- [MRSA: Worse in Community Than Hospital?](#)
- [Small Outbreak of Zyxox-Resistant MRSA](#)
- [Drug-Resistant Staph Vaccine in Works](#)
- [MRSA: Experts Answer Your Questions](#)
- [MRSA Strain on the Rise in Hospitals](#)
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SOURCES: Infectious Diseases Society of America's 44th Annual Meeting, Toronto, Oct. 12-15, 2006. News release, Infectious Diseases Society of America. CDC: "CA-MRSA: Public FAQs."
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