



I L W U LOCAL 13 · 320 GOLDEN SHORE DRIVE · SUITE 300 · LONG BEACH, CA 90802 · (310) 830-6116



HB Bulletin #04-07

December 5, 2007

HEALTH BENEFITS BULLETIN

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)

Individuals that submit ADA applications for “Permanent” status must complete a “Temporary” ADA application until permanent status has been granted or denied by the CLRC.

You must continue your casualty/red number status until you are cited to appear in front of the JPLRC, (which meets 2nd Friday of each month). ***Submitting your ADA application does not immediately grant you ADA accommodations.***

BROTHERS/SISTERS IN THE HOSPITAL

If you or if you know any Brother/Sister of Local 13 are currently hospitalized, please notify the Health Benefits Office.

DOCTOR'S NOTE

A doctor's note is required if you are; out on disability, extending light duty, and ***returning to full duty***. Please bring all notes to the Dues & Health Benefits office. ***You will not be able to switch boards without a doctor's note releasing you to full duty!*** Please be also reminded that all notes ***over 30*** days from the doctor's visit will ***not*** be accepted.

“CASUALTY BOARD” OR “RED NUMBER”

Reminder: You are responsible for your placement on the board. There are no extensions without your doctor's authorization. There is no grace period. You will not be placed on the board or permitted an extension at dispatch. If your time is due to expire, ***YOU WILL NOT BE NOTIFIED BY THE LOCAL OR PMA. For all check-in privileges, your doctor's note must be received in the Health Benefits office by 3:30 p.m. daily. Faxes are not acceptable. No exceptions! Don't forget to give yourself plenty of time; DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!***

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

INFORMATION REGARDING MRSA “STAPH” INFECTIONS

There have been an increasing number of incidents lately concerning Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) infections. This condition has been referred to as a “Staph” or “Super-bug” infection, but generally, little else is known by the public. Below are several questions and answers to better inform you details surrounding this type of bacteria.

Q: What is MRSA?

A: MRSA is a bacteria that is commonly found on the skin or noses of healthy people. It is a common cause of minor skin infections, but can also lead to more serious infections such as pneumonia, bloodstream and surgical wound infections. These more serious infections can lead to hospitalization, especially for children and people with weakened immune systems. What makes this infection so difficult to treat is that **MRSA is resistant to a type of antibiotics known as beta-lactams. These antibiotics include methicillin, oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin.**

Q: Where does MRSA come from?

A: MRSA infections are found in the community, especially where crowds gather, as well as in health care settings (hospitals, nursing homes). Over the years, this bacteria has become more resistant to antibiotics. This means that the bacteria can no longer be killed by common antibiotics.

Q: What do MRSA infections look like?

A: Skin infections can appear to resemble “spider bites”, pimples, or boils. The area of infected skin is often red, swollen and painful to the touch. Pus may also drain from this area.

Q: What is MRSA Colonization?

A: Colonization means that MRSA is present on or in the body *without causing infection or an illness*. People who are either colonized or infected can spread MRSA to other people. MRSA infection may spread to other areas of the body as well.

Q: How is MRSA spread?

A: By not washing your hands frequently or by touching someone or something that has been contaminated by MRSA and not washing your hands. Close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items and surfaces, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene are all leading causes of the spread and infection of the MRSA bacteria.

Q: What can you do to stop the spread of MRSA?

A: There are several things that can be done to stop the spread of this bacterial infection:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly and frequently.
- Keep cuts clean and covered with a proper dressing or bandage until they are healed.
- Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or anything contaminated by a wound.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as razors, towels, toothbrushes, water bottles, and sports equipment that directly touches your body.
- Clean objects such as gym and sports equipment before and after each use.
- Shower with soap and water immediately after participating in sports or working out in a gym.
- Wash dirty clothes, linens, towels with hot water and laundry detergent.
- Dry clothes in a hot dryer as opposed to air-drying them.
- Do not demand antibiotics from your doctor.
- Take **ALL** antibiotics as prescribed. Do not stop taking the prescribed antibiotic until you run out of medication. If you stop taking the prescribed antibiotics before you run out of medication MRSA can come back even stronger causing you to get even sicker and reduce your chances of recovery.
- **DO NOT** share antibiotics with anyone else.

In addition, if you are visiting a healthcare facility, please follow these recommendations to help reduce the spread of MRSA bacterial infections:

- **DO NOT** visit if you are not feeling well or are sick with a fever, cough, rash, body aches, sore throat, diarrhea, or are throwing up.
- **ALWAYS** wash your hands before eating and after using the bathroom.
- Follow the posted visiting hours.
- Limit the number of visitors.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after entering the patient’s room or place of care.
- Wear clean clothes.
- **DO NOT** sit on the patient’s bed.
- **AVOID** using the patient’s toilet.
- Before bringing gifts, food and other personal items, ask what is allowed. Some patient care units may not allow flowers, plants, fresh fruits, or other foods.
- **AVOID** adding to clutter in the patient’s room which makes cleaning the patient’s room difficult.
- Talk to the patient’s nurse if you have concerns about the cleanliness of the room.
- **DO NOT** touch the patient’s wound (or wounds), devices, or any hospital equipment in the room.
- If you are worried or have any questions, speak with the treating physicians and/or nurses.

Q: Are MRSA infections treatable?

A: Yes. Most MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. However, they may also be treated by draining the abscess or boil, without using antibiotics. It is important that MRSA only be treated by a healthcare provider.

Above all, it is imperative to remember that you should contact your doctor immediately if you think that you have been infected by MRSA. They will be able to determine the best type of treatment for each individual. Until more is known about MRSA, we should all do what we can to help curb future infections from occurring.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

For more information: www.cdc.gov/incidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html & Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council

Reminder: DO NOT FORGET TO BRING YOUR PARKING TICKET TO THE OFFICE TO BE VALIDATED.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Fraternally,
Jerry Avila
Health Benefits Representative