



Central Region School Insurance Group

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TO: CRSIG Members
FROM: Christina M. Stark, Loss Control Specialist
DATE: November 15, 2007
SUBJECT: *Hand Washing Question – What about cold water?*

In the public school setting, methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) has been getting a lot of attention recently and with this as a growing public concern it has been recommended by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) in conjunction with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) that the primary infection control recommendation to keep MRSA from spreading is hand washing.

While it is mandatory that the public schools have hot water plumbed and available for use in food facilities, restrooms, locker rooms and nurse stations, some in-classroom and in-office sinks do not have warm water available, as they are not plumbed with hot water.

Typically, warm water is mentioned in most hand washing instructions. Since many classrooms and school offices do not have access to warm water CRSIG contacted the CDC directly for their reference. Their response for this scenario was, "Hot water is not required for hand washing to be effective. The practice of rubbing the soapy hands together for 15 seconds (or more) and rinsing under running water is effective in removing microorganisms that are not part of the normal skin flora from the hands. In addition, alcohol hand gels are also effective if the hands are not visibly soiled."

Please use this memo along with the MRSA "Heads Up!" packet, mailed out on November 14th to all CRSIG members, when conveying this important message to faculty, staff, parents and students.

Additionally, the MRSA information contained within the packet will be available through the CRSIG.com website soon.

As always, please feel free to contact CRSIG with any questions or concerns.