

Staph

Continued...

Keep these recommendations in mind, and take immediate action. By doing so, you will not only be taking positive health prevention steps for yourself, but also for others. You will be reducing the spread of staph and MRSA. Practice your personal hygiene and live MRSA free.

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Avian Flu Continued...

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Meningitis Continued...

For those who are interested, vaccinations are offered on campus at the CSULB Student Health Services on Monday and Tuesday from 8:30am to 10:30am. It takes only three easy steps: walk into the SHS, pay the cashier, and receive the vaccination. And if you prefer to see your personal physician, call today and make those arrangements. For any further questions or concerns, please contact the Student Health Services, (562) 985-4771.

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HEALTH BEAT

A Division of Student Services, Student Health Services, Health Resource Center

Meningitis Awareness By Jackelene Valdez

Most of us are aware of the one case, not to be confused with an outbreak, of bacterial meningitis on campus this past February 2007. Upon notification that a student was infected, students who had been directly associated with the patient were contacted, and the Student Health Services provided the meningitis vaccine for all those who wished to be vaccinated.

Meningitis, or Meningococcal Disease, also referred to as spinal meningitis, infects a person's spinal cord and/or the protective fluid that surrounds the brain. There are two forms of meningitis, viral and bacterial. The viral form is less severe, often resolving without specific treatment, while bacterial is serious and can cause brain damage and/or death.² Bacterial meningitis exists in several strains that locate themselves in an individual's nasal passages and/or throat.¹ Similar to flu-like symptoms, an infected person may experience sudden fever, stiff neck, and headache. Nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, altered mental status, and seizures can accompany these symptoms that may appear as quickly as several hours, or from 1-2 days after contact.¹ It is critical to know which type of meningitis is causing the infection in order to quickly prescribe the appropriate antibiotics, increasing the chance of a healthy recovery, and preventing the infection from spreading to others. Since the 1990s, as part of their routine inoculations, children receive meningitis vaccinations.¹

Meningitis is transmitted through air droplets and direct contact with infected persons. College students are known to be particularly vulnerable to meningitis. Lifestyle factors, such as: living in dormitories, moving away to a new residence, attending a new school with students from geographically diverse areas, sharing beverages or utensils, going to bars, active or passive smoking, and irregular sleeping patterns increase their chances of becoming infected.² For prevention, always WASH YOUR HANDS with soap and water after using a bathroom facility, having physical contact with others, and before food preparation. In haste to spruce up, don't use a friend's brush, comb, toothbrush, or lipstick. And when eating, be sure all utensils have been thoroughly cleaned before using them or putting food in your mouth. Also, it is highly suggested for all new freshman and incoming students to consider getting vaccinated.

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Love Your Liver By Melissa Attia

Unlike the heart, the liver does not inspire us to write poetry or compose songs of love. But in spite of its lesser romantic reputation, it is an incredibly important organ that regulates digestion, energy storage, and removes poisons from the body. Therefore, it is critically important to protect this organ from hepatitis, a destructive viral infection that causes the liver to swell and function improperly. There are five types of hepatitis infections, Hepatitis A through E, with A, B, and C being the most common types of infections in the United States.¹ Transmission amongst the various types of hepatitis differs, so it is important to assess your infection risk through knowledge of this disease and awareness of precautionary methods to utilize in order to protect yourself.

Hepatitis is problematic because not everyone infected will present symptoms. However, the most common symptoms are fever, headaches, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dark-colored urine, pale bowel movements, abdominal pain, and yellowing of skin and/or eyes (jaundice).² If a person suspects he/she was exposed or put at risk of infection, make an appointment at the CSULB Student Health Services (SHS), (562) 985-2727.

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV)

Transmission: HAV is found in the stool of HAV infected persons and is contracted by ingesting feces-contaminated food/water or material.

Risks: Coming in contact with an infected person in the following ways: household contact, traveling to other countries, sexual contact, and intravenous drug use.

Prevention: Wash hands with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and always before preparing and eating food. HAV vaccinations offer very strong protection. The vaccine is administered in 2 injections during a 6-month period.

Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)

Transmission: HBV is passed in semen, vaginal secretions, blood from contaminated needles, including tattooing and body piercing needles, and from mother to child.

Risks: Having multiple sex partners, sexual contact with an infected person, sharing needles, being born to an infected mother, and working in the health care industry.

Prevention: The HBV vaccine is a series of 3 injections administered over a 6-month period. Further prevention steps include: practicing safer sex, not sharing needles, getting a tattoo or piercing by an artist that uses safe health practices, and not sharing personal items with others, such as toothbrushes or razors that may have blood on them.

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)

Transmission: HCV is transmitted by contact with infected blood, contaminated needles, including tattooing and body piercing needles, razors, and from mother to child.

Risks: Sharing needles, health care workers, infants born to infected mothers, and persons with multiple sex partners.

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A Traveling Risk: Avian Flu By Izola Phillips

Many students will travel to different countries this summer for pleasure and/or educational enrichment. As a traveling student, the last thing you want is to get sick in a foreign country and not be able to enjoy your time. Therefore, it is important to obtain knowledge about health risks during your travels. In recent years, one health threat that has made headlines is avian influenza. Medical experts agree, if the virus mutates and infects humans, it could become potentially a pandemic threat, spreading easily from person to person.

The avian influenza virus also known as H5N1, influenza A subtype, predominantly infects birds and is highly contagious amongst fowl. Human to human transmission is rare, but there have been more than 250 confirmed cases of human infection and more than 150 confirmed deaths, mainly due to direct contact with an infected bird, carcass, or contaminated surface. Between 2003 and 2007, several countries have reported human infection to the World Health Organization (WHO). The countries having documented avian influenza cases include: Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Laos, Nigeria, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam.¹

If you plan on traveling to any one of these countries, the WHO does not recommend any restrictions. However, it is strongly suggested that travelers avoid direct exposure to infected birds. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends student travelers make an appointment four to six weeks before travel with a healthcare provider or a travel medicine specialist to ensure vaccinations are up to date. It is also recommended that regardless of the destination, the student traveler should educate him/herself about "disease risks and preventative measures" by visiting the CDC's Travelers' Health website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>.²

In humans, avian influenza produces symptoms that range from typical influenza-like symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches) to eye infections (conjunctivitis), pneumonia, acute respiratory distress, viral pneumonia, and other severe and life-threatening complications. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved four antiviral medications for the treatment of avian influenza, unfortunately, some of the viruses are resistant to two of the medications.³ Therefore, it is important to see a health care professional to determine the best treatment option for your healthcare needs.

Regardless of your destination this summer, it is important to be informed and educated about disease risks and preventative measures. By following recommendations and guidelines, chances for a pleasurable trip are increased, and the risk of potential illness is lessened. Have a great summer that is filled with fun and good health.

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Liver Continued ...

Prevention: There is no vaccine to prevent HCV. Preventive methods include not sharing needles, using tattoo parlors that follow safe health practices, not sharing personal items that may have blood on them like razors and toothbrushes, and using safe sex methods.

Hepatitis Vaccinations at CSULB

At the SHS Immunization Clinic, hepatitis A&B vaccinations are offered every Monday and Tuesday from 8:30am to 10:30am, on a walk-in basis. The costs are: Hepatitis A - \$20.50 per shot, 2 injection series; Hepatitis B - \$26.00/ per shot, 3 injection series

To find out more information about Hepatitis and the vaccinations offered, visit the Health Resource Center online at http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/students?hrc/Health_Topics/topics/immunizations.htm or call (562) 985-4609.

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What's Up Your Nose? By Alex Ramos

How often have we observed children with fingers up their noses, feeling around for something? Could we ever imagine this action is not merely an obnoxious habit, but instead, a step taken to thwart off a health threat residing in the nose? Probably not, but truthfully, a health danger does reside in our nose called staphylococcus aureus, commonly known as staph. Approximately 25% to 30% of staph bacteria are colonized in the nose, while the majority resides on the skin. Staph is one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States.¹ Minor related staph infections are pimples and boils that do not even warrant antibiotic treatment. However, staph can turn threatening, rapidly becoming a serious infection found in surgical wounds, the blood, and even a contributing cause of pneumonia.¹ If staph progresses to this level, antibiotics can be administered and the bacteria will be eradicated.

In the past few years, staph bacteria resistant to many antibiotics has developed into what is called MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus).² MRSA is resistant to different forms of antibiotics called beta-lactams, which includes methicillin, oxacillin, penicillin, and amoxicillin. Medical clinicians view MRSA as the staph that outsmarts antibiotics. It is for this reason that MRSA and other antibiotic-resistant bacteria are sometimes called "super bugs."²

MRSA can be spread from one person to another through casual contact or through contaminated objects.² Here on campus, students should be aware of other ways in which they could acquire MRSA. It can be passed from one person to another when sharing a living space. Remember when living with others, make sure all objects are sanitized and dishes are cleaned. Beware of sharing personal items. Another setting fraught with potential infectious possibilities is the gym. Protect yourself from making direct contact with another person's sweat by using a towel to cover areas in which you might make direct contact, especially when using a workout machine. And if you are a member of a team, NEVER share items like towels, bar soap, or razors with others.

The symptoms of MRSA depend on where the infection is located on the body. If the infection occurs in a wound, that area of the skin may be red or tender.² In the urinary tract, a person may experience fever, back pain, a burning sensation when urinating, or the need to urinate more frequently. And if you have another illness, such as pneumonia, you may develop a cough.² It is important to see a doctor immediately because MRSA can become serious in a short amount of time. Here are some tips to reduce the spread of staph and MRSA:

- Wash hands, using liquid soap and warm water before and after hands-on contact with others.
- Dry hands with disposable paper towels or air blowers (avoid sharing towels).
- Limit sharing of personal items (dishes, soap, clothing).
- Shower if there has been substantial skin-on-skin contact with another person.
- Keep skin lesions (e.g., boils, insect bites, open sores, or cuts) covered with a clean dry dressing.
- At the gym, use a barrier (a towel or a layer of clothing) between the skin and shared equipment.
- If you are given antibiotics for an infection, take the entire prescription as directed by your doctor.

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