



Creating Podcasts to Communicate Health Protection Messages

CDC has determined through data collection and research that some audiences don't receive important health messages if the information is only disseminated in print or through public service announcements. Newer interactive technology such as text messaging, audio and video podcasts, blogs, and social networks has been shown to reach certain audiences more effectively than other methods. In 2007, Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections in community settings received considerable media coverage, and communities were concerned. Raising public awareness about MRSA and how it can spread is essential to preventing MRSA-caused infections.

CDC is using new interactive technology to increase the reach of its health protection messages and the availability of topical health information. Podcasting is one mechanism for providing timely, convenient, free audio and video content for both the general public and healthcare providers. As one component of interactive media, podcasts provide an innovative method of presenting health information so that it is

available to the consumer at his or her convenience.

With the risk of MRSA infections for young people – such as high school athletes – CDC wanted to develop practical ways of reaching these audiences with information about preventing and recognizing possible MRSA infections. A podcast about MRSA became a cost-effective method of making this important information available quickly and easily, especially for younger audiences.



CDC heard from the mother of a teenage boy who learned about MRSA through the CDC podcast that he had downloaded. He explained to his mother that he learned that sharing athletic gear in school locker rooms could possibly result in a MRSA infection. According to the young man's mother, this teen was sufficiently impressed with the seriousness of MRSA that he passed on what he had learned to his friends and teammates. The teen's new knowledge resulted from one of the more than 16,000 downloads of the MRSA podcast in 2007.

CDC's podcasts provide health information ranging from diabetes prevention to hurricane preparedness. More than 500 podcasts are available, with about 4,000 downloads daily. CDC continues to use podcasts and other new media technology to ensure that important public health information is transmitted to the public.

To access CDC's podcasts library, visit:
<http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/index.asp>.



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