



# Health Awareness

## New Technology May Help Hospitals To Combat MRSA

(NAPSA)—A new awareness of the growing prevalence of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, is prompting many hospitals to focus on identifying new ways to protect patients in the hospital from contracting this potentially deadly germ. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently reported that MRSA bloodstream infections cause an estimated 18,650 deaths per year in the United States, which are more per year than is caused by HIV/AIDS. Known as the “superbug,” MRSA is more commonly found in a health care setting than in the community and can contaminate medical devices used to deliver medication to patients, such as intravenous (IV) catheters.

Hospitals and other health care facilities have developed extensive infection-control programs to prevent infection-causing agents or pathogens from contaminating medical devices and surrounding areas, but even when clinicians in hospitals practice good hygiene techniques, the risk of pathogen contamination may still persist.

“Catheter-related bloodstream infections are a daunting challenge for the global health care system,” said Dennis G. Maki, M.D., Ovid O. Meyer Professor of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. “While adherence to basic infection control practices and procedures is essential, I



believe that novel technologies for prevention are urgently needed to complement these efforts and reduce risk to the lowest levels possible.”

Now there is a technology that helps to prevent contamination and growth of certain bacteria within the needleless IV access device commonly used with IV catheters. Baxter Healthcare Corporation recently introduced the V-Link Luer-activated device (LAD) with VitalShield protective coating, making it available for hospitals around the country.

V-Link with VitalShield is the first needleless IV connector to contain an antimicrobial coating and has been shown to kill on average 99.9 percent of specific common pathogens known to cause catheter-related blood-

stream infections, including MRSA. Silver has been used for centuries as an antimicrobial agent, and the specially designed silver formulation that coats this device has been shown to be effective against a broad spectrum of infection-causing agents. The silver antimicrobial coating helps prevent the contamination and growth of specific pathogens within the device. Reduction in colonization or microbial growth on the device has not yet been studied to substantiate a reduction in infections.

Luer-activated devices are sometimes called IV “connectors” because they are the linking port between the IV tubing and the catheter that is placed in a patient’s vein. These devices are also often integrated as part of IV tubing, forming a pathway for medications and fluids.

Many hospitalized patients need a steady supply of medications or fluids delivered into their bloodstream. Typically, an IV catheter is placed in a patient’s vein to allow direct access to the bloodstream. In the process of injecting medications or fluids into a sterile line, surface or other environmental contaminants may be introduced.

V-Link helps to prevent contamination and growth of pathogens on the device at the point of entry to the patient’s bloodstream.

For more information, visit [www.baxter.com](http://www.baxter.com).