

CDC Traces MRSA Outbreaks to Improper Injection Practices in Pain Clinics

Is a medication shortage causing you to use single dose vials for more than one patient?

On July 13, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report detailing two life-threatening outbreaks that occurred when healthcare providers used medication from single-dose/single-use vials for multiple patients undergoing treatment for pain. At least 10 patients contracted severe staph or MRSA (methicillin-resistant *S. aureus*) infections and had to be hospitalized. An additional patient died, and although MRSA was not listed as the cause of death, it could not be ruled out.



Repackaging is the way to go.

These breaches of basic infection control practices are a stark reminder that CDC recommendations for injection safety must be followed closely with every patient, even during times of medication shortages. In circumstances when individually packaged and appropriately sized single-dose/single-use vials are unavailable (e.g., during national shortage) contents from unopened vials can be packaged into multiple single-use vehicles, provided that the repackaging is performed in accordance with all standards in United States Pharmacopeia General Chapter <797 >.

The CDC encourages clinicians to double check their practices against CDC's Injection Safety Recommendations. This is a very handy checklist that you can also use in your practice to train new clinical personnel and to test personnel skills annually.

In addition, CDC offers healthcare providers a toolkit (this is excellent!) featuring a narrated PowerPoint presentation that is ideal for staff meetings, seminars, and other education opportunities.

Is your facility performing injections correctly?

We know that medical practices often do not follow the same safety practices that hospitals do, but now is the time to start. You don't want your patient to get sick from something done wrong in your facility, and you certainly don't want the risk exposure, lawsuits, or bad publicity. Nurse leads and managers and practice administrators, make sure your practice is doing it right!