PRESS RELEASES

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Ecolab's New Surgical Hand Scrub Saves Hospitals Time and Money

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 8, 2005--Ecolab Inc. has introduced a new waterless surgical hand antiseptic that, based on independent testing and available public literature, is not only the strongest formulation on the market, but also the mildest for the hands and skin.

ENDURE® 450 Surgical and Healthcare Personnel Hand Antiseptic is a welcome addition to hospital operating rooms, as the brush-free, alcohol-based scrub not only provides long-lasting, persistent antimicrobial protection, but the advanced system of moisturizers and conditioners actually helps to rehydrate and maintain skin health with every application.

John Bucholz, Ecolab marketing manager for the company's Healthcare Division, said ENDURE® 450, the company's first market entry for waterless hand scrubs for the operating room, incorporates APT™, a patented system of adjuvants and potentiators that works synergistically with ethyl alcohol to extend persistent residual antimicrobial protection for up to six hours.

"The APT™ technology is really a breakthrough because it works very differently than the other water-added or waterless based products on the market," Bucholz said. "APT™ works by enhancing bacterial cell permeability and susceptibility to alcohol, allowing inactivation and killing of microorganisms on the skin surface and stratum corneum.

"With surgical hand antisepsis, you have to concentrate equally on the complete and speedy removal of bacteria," Bucholz added. "Most importantly, though, is the ability to prevent re-growth under the gloves. A surgery could last six hours, and hands will sweat under the surgical gloves, causing microorganisms to grow. If a doctor cuts their glove and are in a sterile cavity, then bacteria could get in the wound and potentially lead to an infection. In a surgical site, you just can't have that."

In addition to providing the prolonged sustainability that allows the product to make the surgical scrub claim, ENDURE® 450 is faster to use than impregnated scrub brushes which doctors have used in the past. It is also effective for the first scrub of the day and for reentry, which allows for product standardization throughout the operating room.

Users of the product appreciate its mildness.

"We have received a lot of positive feedback about how the product feels on their hands," said Cheryl Littau, a senior scientist for the Ecolab Healthcare Division. "Our product has excellent spreadability, which is crucial in making sure that users get good, uniform coverage. Best of all, it leaves the skin in great condition. We've done comparative testing showing that ENDURE® 450 is actually more moisturizing than lotion."

The feel of ENDURE® 450 and the resulting condition of the hands were critical concerns to Ecolab's Research, Development, and Engineering team, which wanted a product that would not only protect hands, but invite hospitals staffs to use it regularly.

"This is so important," Littau said. "Doctors and nurses frequently wash their hands, and this causes damage to their skin. The more damaged their skin is, the more likely they are to carry infections and unintentionally harm themselves or others while they work. This really is a 'live or die' situation. With the mildness and moisturizing of our product, their hands will be better able to handle the constant washing that is needed. We believe this will encourage greater handwashing compliance."

The Healthcare Division of Ecolab Inc. provides a wide array of solutions and tailored programs for the healthcare market. Ecolab offers infection prevention strategies through comprehensive product lines, including instrument care, surface disinfectants, liquid and foaming surgical scrubs, healthcare personnel hand washes and much more. For more information about ENDURE® 450, contact Ecolab Inc. at 1-800-332-6522.

With 2004 sales of $4.2 billion, Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing, pest elimination, maintenance and repair products for the hospitality, foodservice, institutional and industrial markets. Ecolab shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol ECL.

Ecolab news releases and other investor information are available on the Internet at www.ecolab.com.

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