

## **MRSA Myth Busters**

### **Fact or Myth?**

- 1) A school must be shut down to be cleaned and disinfected if a student has MRSA. **MYTH**

MRSA is not spread through the air. It's spread through contact so anything the infected individual contacted needs to be disinfected but not the whole school. Widespread building disinfection may give people a false sense of security. Diligence in personal hygiene is really the best defense.

- 2) MRSA infections are new and rare. **MYTH**

Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infection in the United States and are a common cause of pneumonia, surgical wound infections, and bloodstream infections. MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus) is a form of Staph that is resistant to an antibiotic called methicillin, along with other commonly used antibiotics. The majority of MRSA infections occur in hospitals and other healthcare settings. Cases of MRSA in other settings is becoming more common and has recently been reported in the news.

- 3) MRSA is not treatable. **MYTH**

Almost all MRSA skin infections can be effectively treated by draining the abscess (by a health care professional) and prescribing appropriate antibiotics. More serious infections, such as pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or bone infections, are very rare in healthy people who get MRSA skin infections. Report suspicious wounds to your health care provider.

- 4) You can get MRSA by sitting next to someone who has MRSA and breathing the same air. **MYTH**

MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection (e.g., towels, used bandages).

- 5) MRSA bacteria on surfaces and hands are resistant to normal hand washing and surface disinfection methods. **MYTH**

Cleaning surfaces with detergent-based cleaners or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered disinfectants is effective at removing MRSA from the environment. Calvin College regularly uses such a product: Green Solutions High Dilution Disinfectant 256. Washing hands with warm water and soap or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers like the Purell foam that Calvin provides is effective.

### **How do I protect myself from getting MRSA?**

- Practice good hand hygiene (e.g., keeping your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and showering immediately after participating in exercise).

- Cover skin trauma such as abrasions or cuts with a clean dry bandage until healed.
- Avoid sharing personal items (e.g., towels, razors) that come into contact with your bare skin; and using a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches.
- Always disinfect athletic equipment after each use and before it comes in contact with other people's skin.