

Antimicrobial Resistance

What can I do as a carer?

“Antimicrobial resistance poses a catastrophic threat. If we don’t act now, any one of us could go into hospital in 20 years for minor surgery and die because of an ordinary infection that can’t be treated by antibiotics.”

Professor Dame Sally Davies, England’s Chief Medical Officer

What can I do?

As more bacteria become resistant to treatment, we are in danger of running out of effective antibiotics. That means that diseases we thought were almost eradicated, such as tuberculosis, will soon be untreatable. It means that routine operations like hip replacements and treatments like chemotherapy will cease to be safe because of the risk of infection. **We must act now!**

- Overprescribing is a major cause of resistance to antibiotics. Every time you take antibiotics you risk making some bacteria resistant. Those resistant bacteria get passed on to other people, so everyone in your community becomes more likely to catch a resistant infection.
 - Don’t** ask for antibiotics if the person you care for has a cold or the flu. These are caused by viruses, which cannot be killed by antibiotics.
 - Do** listen to advice from your doctor on controlling the symptoms of viral infections.
- Taking the wrong dose or missing a dose of antibiotics also contributes to increased resistance.
 - Don’t** stockpile old antibiotics for future use, or buy antibiotics from the internet.
 - Do** make sure the person you care for finishes the whole course of medication, even if they feel better and keep a record of their medication
- Poor hand hygiene increases the chance of infection, and helps spread resistant bugs.
 - Don’t** visit if you are unwell.
 - Do** make sure you wash your hands or use hand gel before visiting a hospital ward.
 - Do** challenge hospital staff on their hand hygiene if you are concerned
 - Do** check whether any medical devices, such as catheters, are still required and cleaned regularly, in line with the advice from their doctor.
- Lack of knowledge about antimicrobial resistance means that not enough is being done to tackle it.
 - Don’t** ignore the issue
 - Do** talk to people about the problem and educate them about the issue

Go to www.imperial.ac.uk/hpruantimicrobialresistance for more information