

What you need to know about Antimicrobial resistance



A simple guide to protecting yourself and your loved ones from antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which is also known as antibiotic resistance.

What is antimicrobial resistance (AMR)?

AMR happens when bacteria and other microbes (germs) become resistant to treatments (like antibiotics). This occurs when these treatments are:

Overused – Taken too often or for illnesses they cannot treat (like colds or the flu). Or used widely in other settings, such as farming and animal care.

Misused – Not taken as prescribed, such as skipping doses, stopping treatment early, or sharing antibiotics with others.



Did you know?

When bacteria or microbes become resistant, infections are harder to treat, can last longer, and may require stronger or more expensive treatments. Often these can only be given via a tube into a vein (intravenously) in hospital. In some cases, infections can become untreatable.

AMR is also made worse by a shortage of new antibiotics and other antimicrobial treatments, with too few drugs being developed to combat resistant microbes like bacteria or fungi.

Should I be worried about using antibiotics?

Antibiotics are lifesaving when used correctly, but misuse leads to resistance, making future infections harder to treat.

Many bacteria are still treatable, but we must use antibiotics responsibly to keep them effective.



How can we prevent antibiotic resistance?

As individuals

- ✓ **Practice infection control:** Wash hands, avoid close contact with sick people, follow hospital infection control practices and stay up-to-date with vaccines; they can reduce infections and the need for antimicrobial treatments.
- ✓ **Use antibiotics wisely:** Only take them when prescribed and always follow the full course of treatment.

As a society

- ✓ **Support new treatments:** Encourage research into new antibiotics, antimicrobial treatments and vaccines to fight resistant infections.
- ✓ **Support action against AMR:** Advocate for policies promoting responsible antibiotic use.
- ✓ **Enforce infection control measures in healthcare:** Ensure settings follow infection control policies, preventing resistant bacteria from spreading.



TOP TIPS FOR PATIENTS



LEARN MORE



1

Do not request antibiotics for viral illnesses like colds or flu, unless advised by your doctor.

2

Ask your doctor if antibiotics are really needed or if other treatments are possible.

3

Take antibiotics as prescribed and finish the full course, even if you feel better.

4

Never share antibiotics – they are prescribed for your specific condition.

5

Please take antibiotics only in consultation with your doctor.

SCAN



Read more about antibiotic resistance on the European Lung Foundation's website.

SCAN



Watch videos showing real experiences of people affected by antibiotic resistance.

“

I rely heavily on antibiotics and anti fungal medications to manage my disease. It is terrifying to think that one day these medications may no longer be able to help me. It is heartbreaking to hear about patients that have lost their battle because the medication that should of helped them didn't work.
Lisa, who lives with aspergillosis

”



Funded by
the European Union



LUNGS EUROPE

A partnership of the European Respiratory Society and European Lung Foundation

www.lungseurope.org