



Antibiotic resistance

A patient's guide

Antibiotics are used to treat or prevent some types of bacterial infection. They work by killing bacteria or preventing them from spreading. But they do not work for everything.

Many mild bacterial infections get better on their own without using antibiotics.

Antibiotics are no longer routinely used to treat infections

The more antibiotics are used to treat trivial conditions, the more likely they are to become ineffective for treating more serious conditions

Antibiotics do not work for viral infections such as colds and flu, and most coughs.

Antibiotics are no longer routinely used to treat

- chest infections
- ear infections in children
- sore throats

When it comes to antibiotics, take your doctor's advice on whether you need them or not. Antibiotic resistance is a big problem – taking antibiotics when you do not need them can mean they will not work for you in the future.

Antibiotic resistance and 'superbugs'

The overuse of antibiotics in recent years means they're becoming less effective and has led to the emergence of "superbugs".

These are strains of bacteria that have developed resistance to many different types of antibiotics, including:

- [MRSA \(methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus\)](#)
- [Clostridium difficile \(C. diff\)](#)
- the bacteria that cause multi-drug-resistant [tuberculosis](#)

These types of infections can be serious, challenging to treat and may be a cause of morbidity and mortality.

The biggest worry is that new strains of bacteria may emerge that cannot be treated by any existing antibiotics.

[Antibiotics don't work for everything \(youtube.com\)](#)



Any further questions?

- If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the Infection Control team, on 020 7288 3679, or you can ask the ward manager to contact us.
- Additional information can be found on NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk

The information in this leaflet has been sourced from <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/antibiotics/antibiotic-antimicrobial-resistance/>

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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