Health Protection Research Unit in Healthcare Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance

NHS National Institute for Health Research

Antimicrobial Resistance

What can I do as a parent?

"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 childhood diseases we thought were almost eradicated, such as scarlet fever and bacterial meningitis, will soon be untreatable. Without antibiotics, now routine operations such as caesarean sections will become too high risk due to infection. **We need to act now!**

- Overprescribing is a major cause of resistance to antibiotics. Children are prescribed more antibiotics than any other group, because doctors find it hard to say no to insistent parents. Studies have shown that around 50% of those prescriptions are unnecessary.

  Don't ask for antibiotics for your child when they are not needed.

  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 your child finishes the whole course of medication, even if they feel better.

- Poor hand hygiene increases the chance of infection, and helps spread resistant bugs.

  Don't prepare or eat food without washing your hands.
  Do make sure your family wash their hands properly (for at least 15 seconds) after using the toilet, coughing or sneezing, or touching animals or raw meat.

- 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, educate your children, involve your child's school.

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