

Antimicrobial Resistance

What can I do?

Antimicrobial resistance and drug resistant infections are a serious problem. Good hand hygiene, proper use of antibiotics and raising awareness with family and friends can go a long way to making a difference in this global health crisis.

1) Good hand hygiene

Always wash your hands or use hand gel before, during, and after making food; before eating; after using the toilet; after coughing or sneezing; and after touching animals or raw meat. Hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds, which is longer than you think: you should at least be able to sing happy birthday through twice.

2) Proper use of antibiotics

Every time you take antibiotics you risk bacteria becoming resistant. Don't ask for antibiotics that you don't need. When you are prescribed medicine, make sure you follow the instructions you are given and always complete the course of treatment. Never save antibiotics for later, share them with others, or buy them over the internet.

3) Raising awareness

Antimicrobial Resistance is a frightening prospect. Our children and grandchildren are being born into a world where antibiotics are no longer guaranteed to work. It is estimated that by 2050, an extra 10 million people per year will die worldwide, meaning drug resistant infections will kill more people than currently die of cancer. Anything which spreads the message is helpful, whether through Facebook, Twitter, or by becoming involved in action groups. If you have school age children, encourage teachers to use the e-bug resources (www.e-bug.eu), or contact us at head.ops@imperial.ac.uk to see what school activities we offer. Make a pledge to become an antibiotic guardian at www.antibioticguardian.com and visit our website at www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/hpru-amr/patient-and-public-information/.

Remember: keeping antibiotics working is essential for medical advances they make possible; including cancer treatment, life saving surgery, and routine operations.