

Text from posters presented at the Great Exhibition Road Festival 2022 by the Institute of Infection at Imperial College.

“The Bad”: When Microbes Cause Disease

We co-exist and often rely on microbes in our environment and bodies; but when do microbes become harmful and cause disease? It’s all about balance!

Some microbes, for example some bacteria and viruses, can be harmful and make us sick. We call these microbes “pathogens”.

Normally, their harmful effects are balanced out by our immune systems, the “good” microbes in our bodies, and vaccinations and/or medicines.

But, sometimes, the balance shifts towards the “pathogenic state”, which is when we get unwell.