

DID YOU KNOW?

Antibiotics are not useful against viruses

So if you go to the doctor with a cold or flu and you are given antibiotics they are not going to help you at all.

There are not a lot of new antibiotics being developed

Pharmaceutical companies are not putting a lot of money into research and development for new antibiotics.

Antibiotics can save lives

But if we continue to use them inappropriately they will not be available in the future.

If you are prescribed a course of antibiotics it is important that you take the full course and at the times indicated by your doctor. Do not save a few for next time or give them to someone else if they get sick.

Our bodies are gardens

We have many different bacteria living in our bodies; they do no harm when they are in their correct place.

Infection prevention is better than cure!

Clean hands save lives!



References:

Antimicrobial Stewardship in Australian Hospitals. 2011. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare

NPS Medicinewise <https://www.nps.org.au/>

Produced by:

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Updated 2011, 2013, 2019.

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Multi Resistant Organisms (superbugs) & Antibiotic Use



A PATIENT/VISITOR INFORMATION BROCHURE

FEEL FREE TO ASK QUESTIONS
Staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have
remember to clean your hands do this often and correctly!

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WHAT ARE RESISTANT BACTERIA?

Resistant bacteria (or superbugs as the media like to call them) are bacteria that have changed or mutated so that many antibiotics do not kill them eg. MRSA, VRE, CPE

Some bacteria have become resistant to every antibiotic that we have available.

Bacteria are smarter than we give them credit for. If they are exposed to an antibiotic they start to alter so that they work out a way to make the antibiotic ineffective.

Bacteria that were easy to kill 50 years ago have now worked out how to survive exposure to antibiotics.

HOW HAS THIS HAPPENED?

Since the 1940's many lives have been saved due to the introduction of antibiotics.

Infections that resulted in amputation were able to be treated with antibiotics.

Pneumonia became treatable and not always a fatal illness.

However over the last 80 years we have taken antibiotics for many illnesses that they are not needed for such as colds and flus.

Australia is one of the highest users of antibiotics per head of population.

Approximately 19 million prescriptions for antibiotics are written in Australia every year.

Every time a bacteria has contact with antibiotics it has an opportunity to develop resistance

WHY ARE RESISTANT BACTERIA SUCH A PROBLEM?

There have been no new antibiotics introduced for over 10 years but every year we see new resistant bacteria.

Resistant bacteria are not just found in hospitals, they are now found in aged care facilities and even in people who have never been in hospital.

Even if you have never had antibiotics you are at risk of getting an infection with a resistant bacteria.

The more of these bacteria that are around in the community and hospitals the greater the risk there is that they can be transferred to other people

If you are get an infection with a resistant bacteria:

- You will have the infection and be sick for longer
- You are more likely to have complications of the infection.

The World Health Organisation states that antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health



WHO IS AT RISK OF GETTING AN INFECTION WITH A MRO?

In hospital, some people have a lowered ability to fight off infections or they have treatments which leave them at risk of becoming infected with M.R.O's.

Breaks in the skin, for instance, from intravenous lines, surgical incisions or existing wounds, can all be an entry point for M.R.O's.

IF I HAVE A MRO WILL IT AFFECT MY CARE IN HOSPITAL?

Depending on where the infection is and how it can be spread to others, staff caring for you may wear gloves and gowns and other protective equipment if in close physical contact with you or items associated with your care.

CAN I STILL HAVE VISITORS? **YES**

New born babies should not have physical contact with you.

People with skin conditions or wounds should keep them covered and avoid close physical contact with you.

Sometimes visitors may need to wear a gown and they must be reminded to clean their hands before and after assisting you, and at the end of the visit.