

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

World Antibiotic Awareness Week: 14-20 November 2016

HANDLE ANTIBIOTICS WITH CARE

WHAT HEALTH WORKERS CAN DO TO FIGHT ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE*

1. Prevent infections by ensuring your hands, instruments and environment are clean
2. Keep your patients' vaccination up to date
3. If you think a patient might need antibiotics, where possible test to confirm and find out which one
4. Only prescribe and dispense antibiotics when they are needed
5. Prescribe and dispense the right antibiotic at the right for the right duration.



Source: World Health Organisation

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotic resistance happens when bacteria change and become resistant to the antibiotics used to treat the infections they cause. These bacteria are harder to treat than non-resistant bacteria when they infect humans.

Impact of antibiotic resistance on health

Antibiotic resistance is rising to dangerously high levels in all parts of the world and there is an urgent need to change the way antibiotics are prescribed and used. A growing list of infections—such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, blood poisoning and gonorrhoea—are becoming harder, and sometimes impossible, to treat as antibiotics become less effective.

When infections can no longer be treated by first-line antibiotics, more expensive medicines must be used. Antibiotic resistance leads to higher medical costs, prolonged hospital stays and increased mortality. Without effective antibiotics for the prevention and treatment of infections, organ transplantations, chemotherapy and surgeries such as caesarean sections become much more dangerous.

Misuse of antibiotics and its dangers

Misuse of antibiotics in humans and animals is accelerating the process of resistance to antibiotics. Antibiotics are often over-prescribed by health workers and over-used by the public. In countries where antibiotics can be bought without a prescription, emergence and spread of resistance is made worse.

Without urgent action, we are heading for a post-antibiotic era, in which common infections and minor injuries can once again kill.

Prevention and control

In order to reduce the impact and limit the spread of resistance, the general public should be advised to:

- ⇒ Prevent infections by regularly washing hands, practicing good food hygiene, avoiding close contact with sick people and keeping vaccinations up to date
- ⇒ Use antibiotics only when prescribed by a certified health professional
- ⇒ Always take the full prescription
- ⇒ Never use left-over antibiotics
- ⇒ Never share antibiotics with others