

# Antibiotic resistant bacteria



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## What are antibiotic resistant bacteria?

- Bacteria are tiny organisms not visible with the naked eye. Bacteria are everywhere, both inside and outside of your body. Some people call them 'germs'.
- Antibiotics are medicines used to prevent and treat infection caused by bacteria. They come in many forms, including tablets, capsules, liquids or creams.
- Some types of bacteria are resistant to antibiotics. This means the antibiotics do not control or kill the bacteria and cannot treat the infection.
- There are many types of bacteria that can be resistant to antibiotics. They can live in our airways and bowel or on our skin without causing any harm.
- If these bacteria move to other places in the body or an open wound, they can cause chest and bladder infections or more serious infections.
- If you get an infection caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria, your doctor will use a different antibiotic to treat it.

## What happens if I have antibiotic resistant bacteria?

### In Hospital:

- Tell your Doctor or Nurse you have antibiotic resistant bacteria.
- You may be moved to a single room.
- Hospital staff will clean their hands before and after touching you. They will wear an apron and gloves.
- You can leave your room if you feel well enough. Do not visit other patients.
- Wash your hands or clean them with alcohol-based hand sanitiser before leaving your room and when returning to your room.
- You can continue to have visitors and have as much contact with them as you like. For example, you can hug and kiss your children.

### At home:

- Tell your family doctor (GP) or community nurse.
- You do not need to do anything special or different.
- You can share things like plates, cups, sheets and towels as normal.
- You can continue to visit and be visited by friends and family.
- You are free to go wherever you want to go.

## How do I prevent antibiotic resistant bacteria?

- Only use antibiotics when they are prescribed by a Doctor for a bacterial infection. Viruses can also cause infection. Antibiotics do not work against viruses so are not required for a viral infection.
- Make sure you finish the entire course of prescribed antibiotics, do not stop taking them because you feel better. You must take the entire course so that it can be fully effective and not breed resistance.
- Practise good hygiene such as hand-washing before or after handling food, going to the toilet and changing nappies.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing. Use tissues to blow or wipe your nose and dispose of them in the rubbish.



## Where can I get more information?

- Infection Prevention & Control team, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, Sydney  
Telephone: 9382 2519 or 9382 2083
- Your Doctor or Pharmacist.

