

Public Health England (PHE) leads the co-ordination of Antibiotic Awareness activities in England in collaboration with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department of Health, devolved administrations, and other professional organisations.

PHE established the Antibiotic Guardian campaign to help protect antibiotics and improve knowledge about antibiotic resistance.

You are invited to become an Antibiotic Guardian. As an Antibiotic Guardian, encourage people to join in protecting antibiotics against the growing threat of antibiotic resistance at antibioticguardian.com.

Please share on social media using **#AntibioticGuardian**.

This leaflet has been produced by NHS Kernow in partnership with Public Health England.

Contact NHS Kernow

- ☎ 01726 627800
- ✉ kccg.prescribing@nhs.net
- 🌐 www.kernowccg.nhs.uk

Sedgemoor Centre, Priory Road
St Austell, Cornwall PL25 5AS



This leaflet explains why antibiotics are not the best treatment for common illnesses such as colds, coughs and sore throats and why we need to protect antibiotics for the future.



To get this information in another format call:
☎ **01726 627735**

Without effective antibiotics, many routine operations like hip replacements, organ transplants, caesarean sections and treatments for sepsis or chemotherapy will become increasingly dangerous or impossible.

 Over-use of antibiotics can lead to the development of drug-resistant bacteria, which can cause serious infections.

 Antibiotics can cause side effects such as rashes, thrush, stomach pains, diarrhoea, reactions to sunlight and other symptoms.

 Antibiotics also kill the good bacteria in the body, which can make you more prone to other infections.

 Your actions can protect antibiotics for yourself and your family in the future.

**Join us at
AntibioticGuardian.com**





What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotics are important medicines used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Almost every type of bacteria can become stronger and find ways to survive an antibiotic. They become 'antibiotic resistant' so the antibiotic no longer works. The more often we use an antibiotic, the more likely it is that bacteria will become resistant to it.



Should antibiotics be used to treat coughs and colds?

All colds and most coughs and sore throats are caused by viruses. Antibiotics do not work against viruses. If antibiotics are used to treat viral infections, not only is the treatment ineffective, it can also increase the chance of antibiotic resistance. This makes other more serious conditions more difficult to treat.



Can I become resistant to antibiotics?

You cannot become resistant to antibiotics because they are not treating our cells - they only target the bacteria in our bodies. This is why they can also kill the good bacteria in your body, which can lead to side effects like thrush.

Did you know?

9 out of **10** times a sore throat is caused by a virus!



Many common ailments such as coughs, colds or flu are 'self-limiting', which means they will get better in time and can be treated effectively with over the counter or pharmacy medicines. Pharmacists are easily-accessible, highly trained professionals, who are qualified to offer advice on how to ease symptoms and prevent conditions getting worse.

Junior and family Antibiotic Guardian badges

Junior and family Antibiotic Guardian badges have been developed in collaboration with Makewaves, for children, young people and their families/carers to complete tasks and earn badges.

To earn your badge, you need to showcase your knowledge of antibiotics and antibiotic resistance.

To find out how to earn your badge, visit www.antibioticguardian.com/resources/junior-family-antibiotic-guardian



How can antibiotic resistance be avoided?

By only using antibiotics when needed, we can slow down the development of resistance and buy time to develop new types of antibiotics. By not using them unnecessarily, they are more likely to work when we need them.



What can I do about antibiotic resistance?

Only use antibiotics when it's appropriate to do so. We now know that most coughs and colds get better just as quickly without antibiotics. When they are prescribed, the complete course should be taken to get rid of the bacteria completely. If the course isn't completed, some bacteria may be left to develop resistance.



How can preventing infections help?

Stopping infections occurring reduces the need for antibiotics. You can prevent many infections with simple but effective hand hygiene. Wounds and devices (ie tubes) need germ free handling to prevent infection. Vaccination programmes target some of the most serious infections and remove the need for antibiotic treatment.



In 1847, Ignaz Semmelweiss discovered that if doctors washed their hands in hospitals, rates of infectious diseases would fall.