What is antimicrobial resistance (AMR)?

These microbes are changing all the time, which means medicines to fight them can stop working.

This is called “antimicrobial resistance” (AMR).

How does it make health conditions worse?

People with certain health conditions need antimicrobials to fight off or prevent infections.

Cancer
Joint replacement
Organ transplant
Rheumatoid arthritis

Some common infections have become difficult to treat because of AMR, like:

- Bacterial vaginosis
- Urinary tract infections
- Yeast infections
- Sexually transmitted infections

If antimicrobials don’t work, their consequences can be serious, including:

- Worsening disease
- Increased health problems
- More side effects from stronger treatments
- More and longer hospital stays
- Death

What causes AMR?

Antimicrobial drugs can stop working for two main reasons:

OVERRIDE
Antimicrobial drugs, such as antibiotics, antiviral medications and antifungals, are prescribed too often or for too long.

MISUSE
Drugs are prescribed for conditions they don’t treat, such as prescribing antibiotics for viral infections, or people do not take their entire prescription.

AMR by the numbers

7% of people worldwide take antibiotics for viral infections.

12% of infections after surgery are drug-resistant to antibiotics.

10 million people worldwide could die because of AMR by 2050.

Influenza A, which causes half of human flu cases, has developed resistance to one class of antivirals. It also resisted another class of antivirals, which includes Tamiflu, during certain flu seasons.

About 7% of blood samples with Candida, a common fungal infection, tested by the CDC are drug-resistant.

What you can do to prevent AMR

Practice good hand hygiene

Use medicine exactly as prescribed

Don’t hide the excess of medicine, even if you feel better

Don’t take someone else’s prescription

Ask your doctor if you really need antimicrobials

Get vaccinated for preventable diseases

What is antimicrobial resistance (AMR)?

This is called “antimicrobial resistance” (AMR). When microbes have AMR, they are called superbugs.

Superbugs can increase infection risks.