

# Press release: Teach children simple hygiene to help curb infections

The [guidance](#) recommends children in nurseries and young people at university be taught when and how to wash and dry their hands, for example after going to the toilet and before preparing food, in order to prevent the spread of infections. Public Health England's (PHE) educational resources, [e-Bug](#) and Germ Defence, are listed as two ways to promote better hygiene.

Young people living away from home for the first time should also be given information about how to care for themselves when they get an infection that will resolve itself over time, for example, a common cold or flu. They should be directed to 111, the NHS Choices website and local pharmacies if they need advice, the guidance says.

The guidance by NICE and PHE, is aimed at NHS organisations, local authorities and health and social care professionals so they can provide information to people in their care.

The guidance covers the correct use of antimicrobial medicines including that patients should not buy prescription-only antimicrobials online, share them with others or dispose of unused medicine down the sink. NICE also says that the public should be made aware about when it is appropriate to take antimicrobial medicines, and the risks associated with their overuse and misuse.

Professor Gillian Leng, deputy chief executive and director of health and social care at NICE, said:

Antimicrobial resistance is a problem that is happening now and will get worse without action at all levels so we must all play our part.

There are already common infections that are resistant to antimicrobials. Without sustained changes to the way we manage infections and protect these medicines, some routine medical procedures will become fatal.

Education is key to this issue, and that's why we've made recommendations for a whole range of ages; from preschool settings to residential and day care settings for older people.

Paul Cosford, Medical Director Public Health England, said:

We all have a part to play in this battle against antimicrobial resistance to ensure that antimicrobial treatments do not become obsolete in the future. To stop the spread of infections and reduce

resistance, good hand, respiratory and food hygiene and appropriate antimicrobial use are vital. As well as providing education and support resources we also encourage the public, healthcare workers and patients to sign up to be Antibiotic Guardians to make their pledge for how they'll make better use of antibiotics.

Global estimates suggest that more than 700,000 people die every year from drug-resistant strains of common bacterial infections, HIV, TB and malaria.

If antimicrobial resistance continues to increase, this number could rise to 10 million a year by 2050, with people dying from ordinary infections, or from routine operations due to the risk of infection.

Professor Mark Baker, director of the centre for guidelines at NICE, said:

If antimicrobial resistance continues to increase, the consequences will be disastrous. It isn't a problem we can tackle in isolation.

This is why our final guideline emphasises the need for a multi-pronged approach to tackling antimicrobial resistance. We must work together to fight this threat.

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer said:

We need to address the growing problem of drug-resistant infections as the global medicine cabinet is becoming increasingly bare. Preventing infections in the first place is key, and so is education on how to use antibiotics appropriately.

This guidance provides important information on how we can keep these important medicines working.

1. [Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. Twitter: [@PHE\\_uk](#)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland](#)
2. Read the review on AMR (2014) [Antimicrobial Resistance: Tackling a crisis for the health and wealth of nations](#).
3. Antimicrobial resistance is when a bacteria, virus or fungi can no longer be successfully treated by an antimicrobial medicine. It develops when we use these medicines inappropriately.
4. Read the guidance [Antimicrobial stewardship: changing risk-related behaviours in the general population](#).
5. This new guidance complements [antimicrobial stewardship](#).

For more information contact the NICE press office on 0300 323 0142 or out of hours on 07500 605 228.