

# ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

## What are they?

They are bacteria that have become resistant to certain antibiotic drugs designed to kill them. In other words, antibiotics that would usually be used to treat an infection caused by certain bacteria won't work if the person has a resistant type of the bacteria. Because of this, they are usually a little harder and may take more time to treat than other infections. Your body doesn't develop resistance, the bacteria develop resistance.

## Who gets it?

An infection from one of these bacteria happens at any stage of life, although it's most common in those who are over 65, living in crowded conditions, have compromised immune systems, or who take antibiotics frequently or do not complete their prescribed course of medications.

## Can it spread?

Yes, however, good hygiene, including washing your hands carefully after interactions with people, can prevent the spread. Disposable gloves should be worn if contact with body fluids is expected.

## Is it treatable?

Yes. Although the bacteria may be resistant to many antibiotics and difficult to treat, some antibiotics can still successfully cure the infection.

## How do we prevent it?

- Try to prevent unnecessary use of antibiotics
- Good hygiene
- Routine vaccination
- Safe food preparation

## What is the difference between "colonization" and "infection"?

**COLONIZATION** means that the bacteria is in or on the person's body but is not making them sick. Colonization does not need treatment.

**INFECTION** means that the bacteria are present in or on a person's body and it is making them sick. Infections are treated with certain antibiotics.

**Proper use of Universal Precautions will prevent the spread of this condition!**

## What are some signs of infection with one of these bacteria?

Any infection can potentially be caused by bacteria which have developed resistance to antibiotics. If a person you support develops a cough or their cough worsens, develops white drainage or redness around a tube or wound, develops a fever, or experiences pain with urination, please contact their healthcare provider.

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## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

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### **Call 911 if the person:**

- looks very sick
- won't wake up
- has chills or is shaking
- is confused or disoriented
- has low blood pressure
- has decreased urine output
- has a high fever or very warm skin
- has a fast heart rate

### **Other situations:**

- Consult your nurse or the health care provider
- Write down what you see and what you think might be the cause
- Share what you see and think with other staff and your supervisor
- If the person appears sick, call the health care provider
- Share what you see and think with the HCP and/or nurse

