Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria

Western Health

What does "resistant" mean?

It means that the bacteria or germ has developed the means to fight off the effects of antibiotics that are usually used to kill them.

What are Antibiotics?

Antibiotics are agents that act against microorganisms, such as bacteria.

What kinds of infections occur from resistant bacteria?

Any bacterial infection has the potential to be caused by a resistant strain of germ.

Examples include

Pneumonia, bloodstream infection, urinary tract infection, wound infection.

Who can get an infection with resistant bacteria?

Anyone can get a resistant infection but some people are more at risk because their immune system is weak or they have had a procedure in hospital.

How are resistant bacteria transmitted?

All bacteria can be transmitted from person to person by direct and indirect contact.

Who is at increased risk of infection with resistant bacteria?

A Persons whose immune systems is not working well. This can be a person with cancer, a persons in intensive care, someone who has been in hospital for a long time, someone who has taken antibiotics over a long period of time.

How do you prevent the spread of resistant bacteria?

In the hospital a person with a resistant organism is usually isolated in a special room.

Everyone who enters the room is required to take precautions to stop the spread of germs by wearing gowns, gloves and masks if required. Keeping hands clean is one of the best ways of stopping the spread of bacteria. Staff will wash or disinfect their hands before and after touching patients or surfaces.

Other ways to prevent the spread of resistant bacteria?

Always take antibiotics as prescribed.

Finish all prescribed doses.

Do not take antibiotics for colds or flu (Antibiotics only work on bacteria)

Always use good personal hygiene

Do not share personal items such as Toothbrushes, make-up, lip balm or towels

Do not visit patients if you are sick or have an infection

Be aware of infection (redness, swelling, fever) and report them to your doctor or nurse

Follow hospital instructions when visiting someone in the hospital.

You can help us prevent infections?

Always wash your hands before and after visiting patients after contact with blood after contact with other body substances after removing gloves or other protective clothing

You can clean your hands by using

Soap and water

Wet your hands before you apply soap. Rub the soap lather all over your hands. Wash all surfaces of your hands and fingers for 15 to 20 seconds. Be sure to get under your nails, around cuticles and between the fingers. Rinse your hands well, until all the soap comes off. Point your hands down as you rinse. Pat dry your hands completely using a clean towel. Turn off the tap with a paper towel to avoid contaminating your clean hands.

Alcohol hand rubs/gels

These are available throughout all areas at Western Health. Apply a palm full of product in a cupped hand and rub it until it comes in contact with all surfaces of the hands. Rub together until the product dries off.

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The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of all people who use the Australian healthcare system. Copies of the charter in community languages are available near the main entrance of all Western Health hospitals, or ask a staff member or volunteer.

For more information, visit www.safetyandquality.gov.au/australian-charter-healthcare-rights