



To The Point

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

National Cooperative 

Did you know that each year in the US, 2.8 million people are infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria, resulting in more than 35,000 deaths?¹

National CooperativeRx has the scoop on why antibiotic resistance is a societal threat and what you can do to prevent it.

While antibiotics initially transformed modern medicine, they are slowly losing the ability to fight bacteria — a phenomenon known as “antibiotic resistance.”

This is a natural process as bacteria evolve and cannot be stopped. We can, however, take steps to understand the reasons behind antibiotic resistance and attempt to slow it down.

History of Antibiotics

Sir Alexander Fleming invented the first antibiotic, penicillin, which was hailed a “wonder drug” and widely used in World War II to treat wound infections.

In his 1945 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, he warned that bacteria may become resistant to antibiotics if overused. After saving millions of lives, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined antibiotics are at their expiration date.

Reasons for Drug Resistance

- Antibiotics are often overprescribed, with up to 50 percent of prescriptions not actually needed or given the wrong dosing or duration.¹
- Resistant strains of bacteria are spread from person to person or from other environmental sources.
- Antibiotics are being used to promote growth in food-producing animals, when they should only be used to treat infections.
- Bacteria are adapting and becoming resistant faster than research and innovation are able to keep up.

How Can You Fight Resistance?

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Talk to your doctor to make sure you are current on all vaccinations.
- Only take antibiotics when needed; they do not help viruses, such as a cold or flu.
- Take your antibiotic prescription exactly as your health care provider tells you.
- Always properly dispose of unused medication.

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1. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/pdf/threats-report/2019-ar-threats-report-508.pdf>