

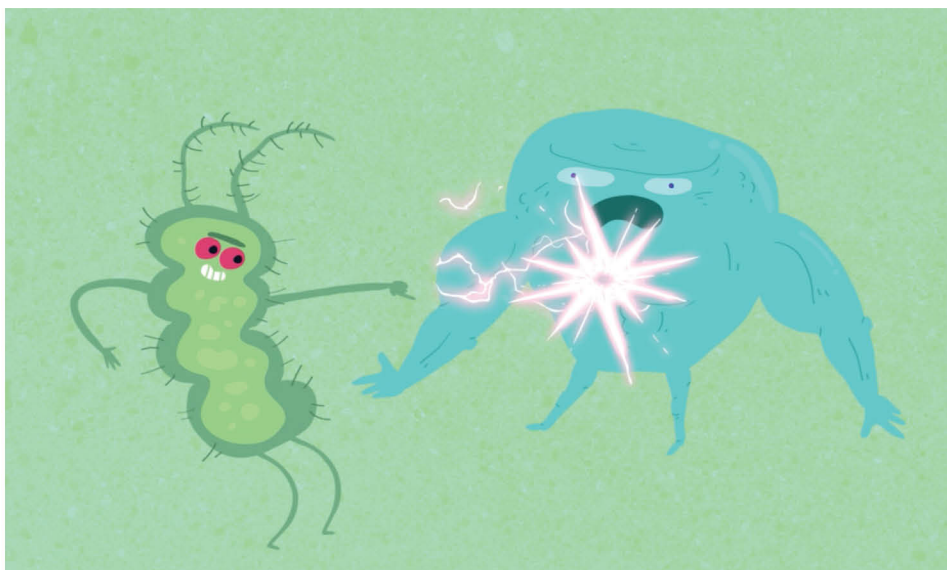
Antibiotic overuse

You can help fight antibiotic resistance



Do you take antibiotics every time you feel sick? If you do, you could be contributing to the growing threat of antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance happens when bacteria develop the ability to defeat the medication designed to kill them.

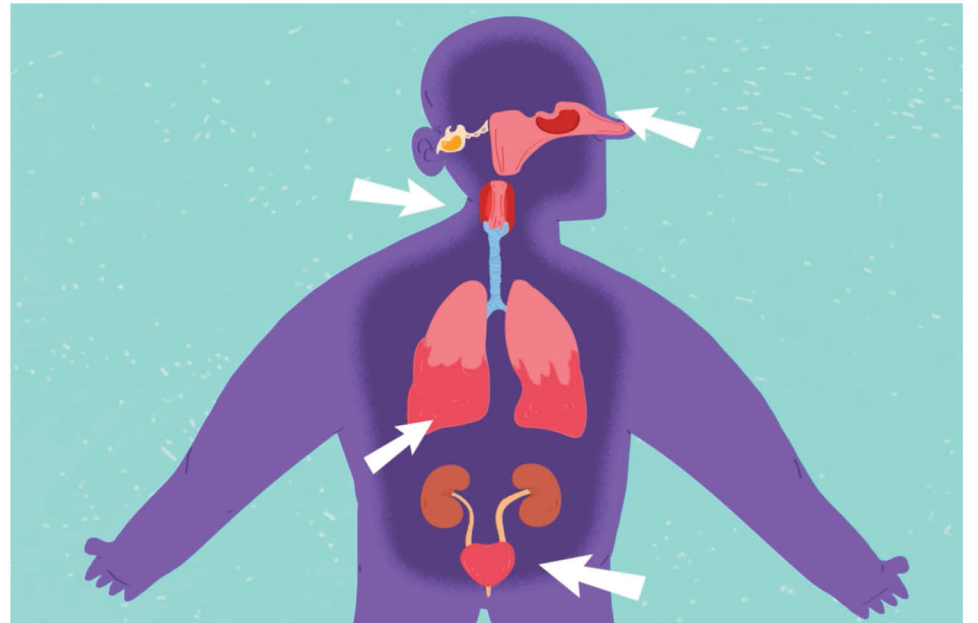
What is antibiotic resistance?



Some bacteria resist by changing the antibiotic so it becomes ineffective, or by blocking it. If even one bacterium becomes resistant, it can reproduce all the other bacteria that were destroyed. This means the strongest and most resistant bacteria survive, reproduce and pass on their traits to the next generation.

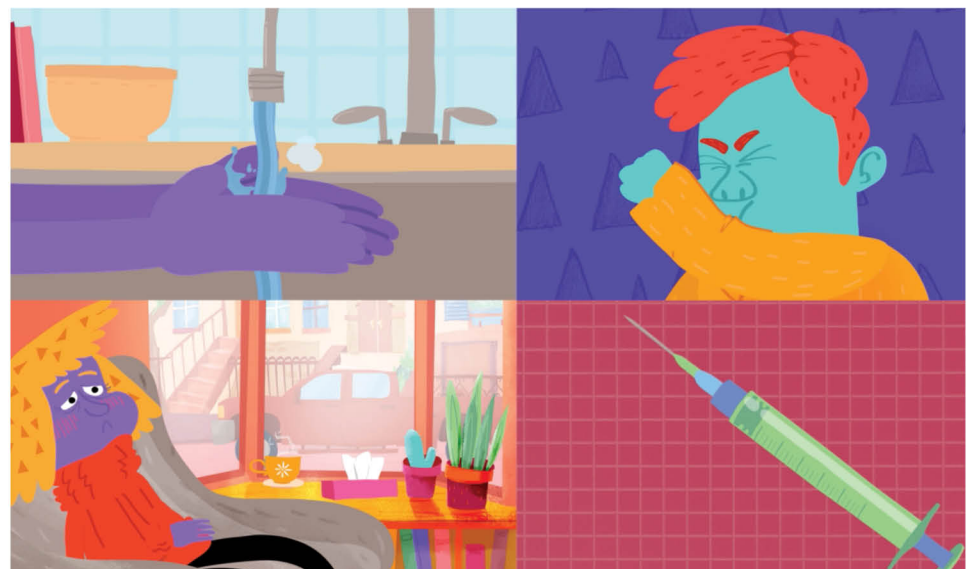
The overuse of antibiotics means that bacteria have more opportunities to mutate in response to them, becoming stronger each time. This means you might become sick and develop an untreatable infection. This could lead to long hospital stays, medical complications and even death. While antibiotics are still an important tool to fight infection, they must be used with caution.

What conditions do antibiotics treat?



Antibiotics can help fight infections caused by bacteria such as: Strep throat, Whooping cough, Urinary tract infections and sometimes sinus or middle ear infections. Antibiotics are not recommended to treat viral illnesses such as Bronchitis, the common cold, a runny nose, sore throat, or the flu. Antibiotics won't have any effect on these conditions because the main cause is a virus. A viral infection will usually go away on its own in 1-2 weeks.

How can you protect yourself?



To avoid picking up or spreading bacteria or viruses in the first place, there are some simple things you can do: keep your hands clean, cover your mouth if you're coughing, stay at home if you're sick, and stay up to date on your vaccinations.

Remember, avoid using antibiotics except when necessary, and take measures to stay healthy to keep bacteria and viruses away.