



DRUG RESISTANCE

Department of Health and Human Services



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Drug resistance happens when antimicrobial drugs—some of which are called antibiotics—can no longer kill microbes (bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites) or stop them from growing. These microbes survive and continue to multiply, causing more harm. For example, when you take an antimicrobial drug, it may kill some of the bacteria that are making you sick, but other bacteria may not be killed by the drug. These are drug-resistant microbes. They are dangerous because they may cause infections that are more difficult to treat and require more expensive drugs. Using antimicrobial drugs too much can promote the emergence of resistance. Antimicrobial drugs should only be used when they are necessary. Never take an antimicrobial drug that is meant for bacteria when you have a viral infection such as a cold, cough, or the flu; it won't help. If you do need to use an antimicrobial drug, use it the way the doctor tells you, and take all the medicine prescribed, even if you are feeling better.

www.cdc.gov/drugresistance