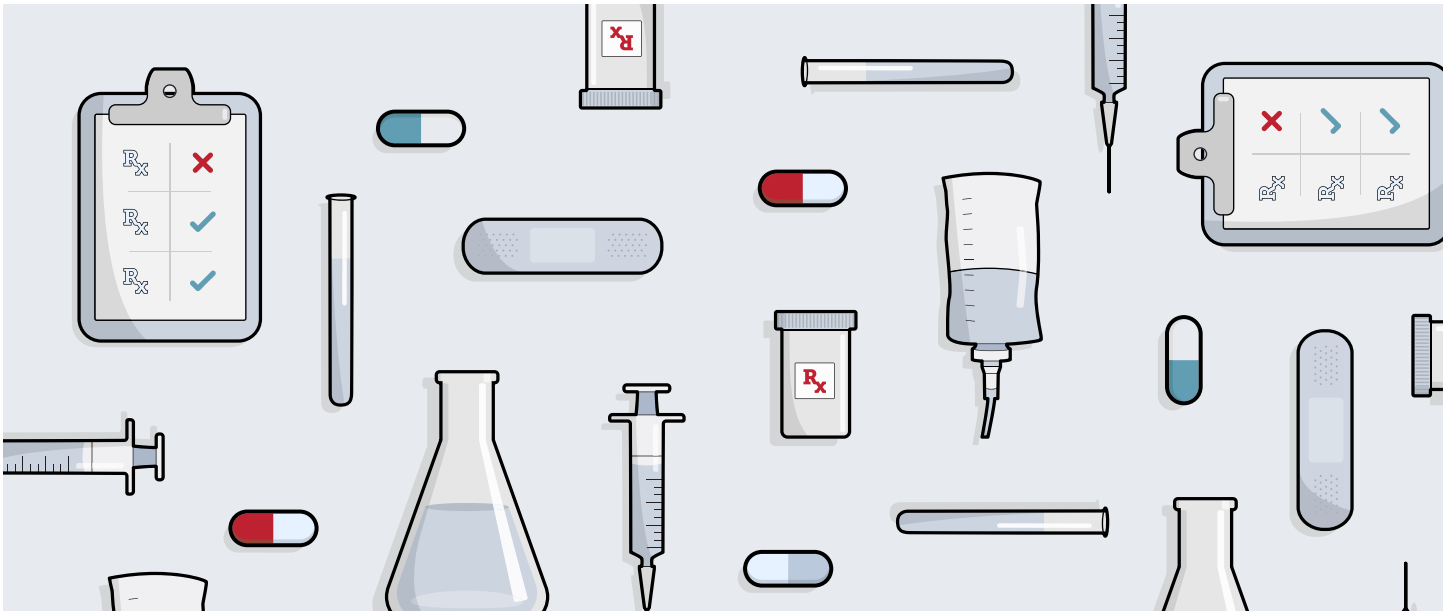
A infographic from Pew

July 2023



Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria Is a Growing Threat, 2023

Where superbugs come from and what can be done to combat them

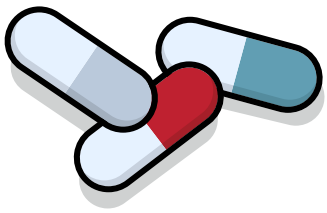
Antibiotic-resistant bacteria pose an urgent and growing public health threat.

Common bacteria, such as those that cause urinary tract infections and sexually transmitted infections, are becoming **increasingly difficult to treat.**

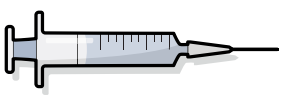
Without effective antibiotics, even **simple infections could become deadly,** making medical procedures like surgery, chemotherapy, and dialysis too dangerous.

2.8 million

antibiotic-resistant infections occur in the U.S. each year.

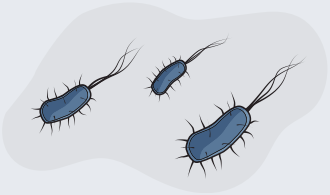


More than 35,000 die as a result.



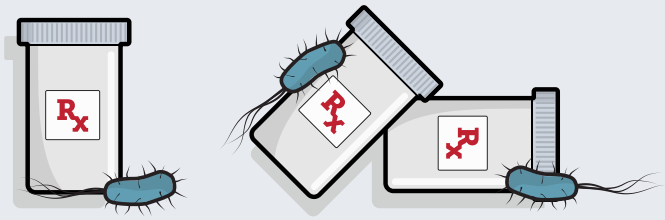
Globally, some 1.27 million people died from antibiotic-resistant infections in 2019.

How do bacteria become resistant to antibiotics?



Bacteria are constantly evolving to beat the drugs used to fight them. As bacteria mutate, some develop the ability **to fight off different antibiotics** and survive to multiply and spread resistance.

Sooner or later, those **superbugs will evolve** to defeat every antibiotic on the pharmacy shelf, so **new drugs** to fight infections **will always be needed.**



What is driving the rise in multidrug-resistant superbugs?

The more antibiotics are used, the less effective they become. Unnecessary and inappropriate use accelerates that process.

1 in 3

antibiotic prescriptions written in doctors' offices, emergency rooms, and hospital-based clinics are **unnecessary**—this equals about **47 million prescriptions each year.**

52%

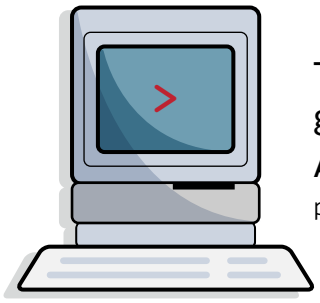
only about half of patients treated with antibiotics for common infections received the recommended antibiotic based on established prescribing guidelines.

The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the superbug threat.

Early in the pandemic, antibiotics were often given to patients even though these drugs do not effectively treat viral illnesses.

↑ **The U.S. saw a 15% increase in infections and deaths from drug-resistant bacteria in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

1984: The last time a new class of antibiotics was discovered.



Today, there are fewer than 50 antibiotics in global clinical development.

Alarmingly, just a handful of those drugs are targeted against the pathogens that present the most urgent threats.

What can be done to combat antibiotic-resistant bacteria?

Better stewardship for existing antibiotics

Eliminate inappropriate use of these lifesaving drugs.

Innovation to find new types of antibiotics

Address the complex economic barriers hindering the development of **new treatment options** for patients.

Together, these efforts will help save antibiotics and protect the health of patients today and for generations to come.

For more information, please visit:
pewtrusts.org/antibiotic-resistance-project

The Pew Charitable Trusts

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