

Antibiotics have been one of the most important life-saving medical developments of the last century.

However, they are not effective against all types of bacteria (so-called intrinsic resistance). In addition, some bacteria can develop tolerance to certain antibiotics or develop ways to break them down (so-called extrinsic resistance). In either case, if these resistant bacteria go on to cause an infection it can be much more difficult to treat.

If the use of antibiotics remains unchecked, common infections will become more dangerous, and surgical procedures where antibiotics are used such as routine hip replacements and caesarean sections will become more difficult to perform safely.

Antimicrobial-resistant infections already cause illness and death in patients, and also disrupt care in hospitals.

Reducing antimicrobial use and resistance is among the key priorities for HSCNI. Local initiatives to tackle this threat are delivered through the NI Department of Health's AMR implementation plan which is aligned to the [UK 5-year action plan for antimicrobial resistance 2024 to 2029](#).

For more information about [Antimicrobial Awareness](#).

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