

# Hand hygiene helps prevent antimicrobial-resistant infections

One out of 10 of patients gets an infection in hospital, and up to 32% of surgical patients get a post-operative infection, more than half of these are antibiotic resistant.



Source: Medihow

Today is World Hand Hygiene Day, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) calls on policy-makers to stop antibiotic resistance spread by making infection prevention and hand hygiene a national policy priority. The slogan of this year's campaign is "Fight antibiotic resistance ... it's in your hands", illustrating the important relationship between good infection prevention and control practices like washing your hands and preventing antibiotic resistance.

## Behaviour change

World Hand Hygiene Day plays an important role in highlighting good infection prevention and control practices to change behaviours to reduce the spread of infections and therefore save the lives of millions. Without behaviour change, antibiotic resistance will remain a major threat.

Through this year's campaign, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is calling on countries and healthcare facilities to strengthen infection prevention and control programmes based on WHO guidelines on core components of infection prevention and control programmes. A key component of which is adequate hand hygiene, which plays a critical role in combating antimicrobial resistance.

"Healthcare-associated infections are one of the most frequent adverse events in healthcare delivery and are a major public health problem that affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide," says Dr Mahmoud Fikri, WHO regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

## Saving eight-million lives

WHO also calls on infection prevention and control leaders to implement its core components for infection prevention, including hand hygiene, to combat antibiotic resistance.

“Healthcare-associated infections cause harm and suffering that are easily avoided. They also result in additional financial burden and sometimes even long-term disabilities or death.”

Hospital administrators are expected to lead a year-round infection prevention and control programme to protect their patients from resistant infections. Adequate hand hygiene reduces the risk of health care-associated infections and has the potential to save eight-million lives every year in hospitals alone.

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