The role of infection prevention and control in preventing antibiotic resistance in health care

- On average, 1 in every 10 patients is affected by healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).
- Antibiotic-resistant HAIs can double or more, the likelihood of death.
- Over 50% of surgical site infections can be resistant to antibiotics.

Effective infection prevention and control (IPC) and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) stops the spread of antibiotic-resistant organisms.

IPC and WASH in health care protects patients and health workers from avoidable infections.

The building blocks of IPC and WASH in health care facilities are:
- effective hygiene practices, including hand hygiene
- core components of IPC programmes
- a clean, well-functioning environment and equipment

This leads to:
- less spread of antibiotic-resistant organisms
- a reduced need for antibiotics

Every infection prevented is an antibiotic treatment avoided:
- Play your role in controlling antibiotic resistance!
- Ensure IPC programmes are in place and champion IPC practices.

IPC saves millions of lives every year.


All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization to verify the information contained in this document. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility or the interpretation of and use of this material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use.

© World Health Organization 2017. Some rights reserved. This work is available under the CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence.