

SUPERBUGS **IN THE CARE** **SECTOR:**

HOW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD AND
WHAT TO DO IF INFECTION TAKES PLACE

THE
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▶ **OVERVIEW**

Superbugs are a growing concern for the Care Sector. They can be deadly, and it is essential to take steps to prevent their spread and to know what to do if an infection does take place. In this guide, we will discuss the best practices for preventing the spread of superbugs in the Care Sector, as well as provide information on how to handle the situation if an infection does occur.

▶ **WHAT ARE SUPERBUGS?**

What are superbugs and why are they different from other viruses?

▶ **HOW TO PREVENT OUTBREAKS**

The best practices on how to prevent an outbreak and stop the spread.

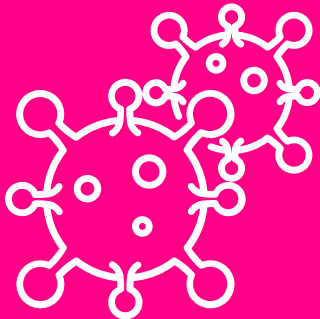
▶ **WHAT TO DO IF AN INFECTION TAKES PLACE**

Protocal tips on what to do if an outbreak does happen.

WHAT ARE SUPERBUGS?



Superbugs, or antibiotic-resistant bacteria, are strains of bacteria that have **developed a resistance to antibiotics**. These bacteria pose a significant threat to public health and are responsible for a range of illnesses and infections, particularly in healthcare settings such as hospitals and care homes. The risks posed by superbugs in these environments can be incredibly serious, as **their spread can be rapid and the illness or infection they cause can be difficult to treat**.



The number of superbugs is increasing, and there are several ways in which they can be transferred from one person to another. This could be **through contact with a contaminated object, infected skin, mucous membranes, or from food/water**. Hospitals and care homes in particular are at a higher risk of superbug infections due to the **increased presence of vulnerable patients, who often have weak immune systems and existing illnesses**.

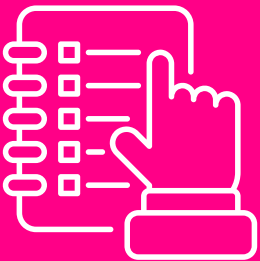
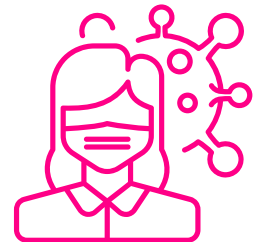
It's important to take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of superbugs in hospitals and care homes, as even minor infections can be life threatening in these environments.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD

The prevention of superbug infections in care homes and other healthcare settings is an important issue for both patients and staff. To reduce the risk of infection, it is essential to adhere to the guidelines and protocols set out by the **World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant authorities.**

It is important to ensure that all staff and visitors are aware of the signs and symptoms of superbugs and to be vigilant about the risks associated with them. This can include:

- ▶ Frequent hand washing
- ▶ Using alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- ▶ Wearing appropriate protective equipment such as masks & gloves
- ▶ Avoiding contact with those diagnosed with an infection



It is also important to maintain good hygiene in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms. **To prevent the spread of superbugs, it is crucial that care homes have an effective cleaning and disinfection regime in place.** Care homes should use cleaners that are designed to eliminate bacteria, fungi, and viruses and regularly clean hard surfaces and fabrics using hot water and detergent. In addition, all linen and bedding should be washed at a temperature of at least 60°C and regularly checked for damage or signs of infection.

It is important to adhere to strict antibiotic stewardship policies and to review their use on a regular basis. Any resident/patient prescribed antibiotics should be monitored closely to ensure that they are taking the medication correctly and that the treatment is effective.

OUTBREAK RESPONSE



In the event that a superbug infection outbreak, there are certain protocols that should be followed.

- 1.** Firstly, it is important to identify and isolate any affected individuals so as to prevent further spread of the infection.
- Secondly, all surfaces, objects, and areas where the infection has occurred should be thoroughly disinfected using an appropriate cleaning product. **2.**
- 3.** Any medical or nursing staff who may have been in contact with the infected person must follow proper safety protocols when treating them.

It is also important to ensure that adequate resources are available to cope with any extra workload generated by the outbreak. This may include additional staff or equipment. Furthermore, a plan must be put in place to **monitor and respond to further cases of infection**. Communication with both staff and family members should also be maintained throughout the process. **Contact tracing should be conducted to identify any individuals who may have come into contact with the infected person.**

Superbugs are an ever-present threat to the care sector. Careful hygiene practices and the use of antimicrobial products are essential for the protection of vulnerable residents. If an infection does take place, it must be dealt with swiftly, as this will help reduce the risk of further spread and protect other patients. With the right awareness and safety measures, the impact of superbugs in care homes can be minimized.