

Drug-resistant superbugs spreading, says WHO

16th October 2025



The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned about the spread of superbugs that are resistant to drugs. The WHO said researchers tested many bugs in its laboratories. The researchers said 1 in 6 (around 17 per cent) of the bugs they tested was drug-resistant. The antibiotics did not kill the bacteria. Many of the drugs have been life-saving for many years. This could bring new risks to our health. Cuts and common infections could be deadly in the future because the antibiotics will no longer kill bacteria. The WHO said: "These findings are deeply concerning." It added: "As antibiotic resistance continues to rise...we're putting lives at risk."

The WHO conducted a large study on superbugs. It looked at data from over 100 countries. Drug resistance is highest in Southeast Asian and Eastern Mediterranean countries. There, 1 in 3 reported infections was resistant. In Africa, 1 in 5 infections was resistant. The study found that bugs were becoming drug-resistant faster than researchers could create new drugs. More and more bugs are becoming resistant to modern medicines. The WHO said between 2018 and 2023, drug resistance increased in over 40 per cent of the bacteria it tested. An additional worry is that there is not enough testing being done to create new, effective drugs. The WHO said this will be a big "future threat".

Sources: who.int / cbsnews.com / reuters.com

Writing

Governments should spend money on creating drugs, not weapons. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

WHO / superbugs / bugs / antibiotics / bacteria / drugs / life-saving / the future / risk / study / data / infections / researchers / modern medicines / worry / big future threats

True / False

- 1) The WHO said superbugs have spread to every country in the world. T / F
- 2) The WHO said around 17 per cent of people have caught a superbug. T / F
- 3) The WHO said cuts could kill us because antibiotics won't work. T / F
- 4) The WHO is very worried about the findings of the study. T / F
- 5) Researchers looked at data from more than 100 countries. T / F
- 6) The country with the highest drug-resistant bugs is in South America. T / F
- 7) Bugs are becoming drug resistant faster than we can make new drugs. T / F
- 8) There is more than enough testing going on around the world. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. spread | a. make |
| 2. resistant | b. ordinary |
| 3. common | c. goes on |
| 4. findings | d. information |
| 5. continues | e. extra |
| 6. data | f. conclusion |
| 7. create | g. increase |
| 8. medicines | h. danger |
| 9. additional | i. drugs |
| 10. threat | j. immune |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How often do you get ill?
- c) How can we stop superbugs spreading?
- d) What happens if drugs no longer kill bacteria?
- e) What things in the world are more worrying than superbugs?
- f) Why are scientists not testing enough new drugs?
- g) What threats might there be to our health in the future?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. researchers tested many bugs in
 2. the drugs have been life-
 3. Cuts and common infections could
 4. These findings are deeply
 5. we're putting lives
 6. The WHO conducted a large
 7. It looked at data
 8. faster than researchers could
 9. bugs are becoming resistant to modern
 10. there is not enough testing
- a. be deadly
 - b. create new drugs
 - c. at risk
 - d. study on superbugs
 - e. saving for many years
 - f. being done
 - g. concerning
 - h. medicines
 - i. laboratories
 - j. from over 100 countries

Discussion – Student B

- a) How worried are you about bugs?
- b) What do you do to avoid bugs?
- c) What do you know about antibiotics?
- d) How often do you take drugs?
- e) What lifestyle changes can we make to keep healthy?
- f) How often do you cut yourself?
- g) What new risks to our health do you know of?
- h) What advice do you have for the researchers?

Spelling

1. warned about the paerds of superbugs
2. tested many bugs in lbtsoareroia
3. The itostcbaiin did not kill
4. common fotnniscei
5. no longer kill raeticab
6. These findings are deeply ccenirnogn
7. The WHO ncdecduo a large study
8. eaetcr new drugs
9. resistant to modern iidsnmece
10. an itnaalddio worry
11. create new, tfefvicee drugs
12. this will be a big future terhta

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. j	3. b	4. f	5. c
6. d	7. a	8. i	9. e	10. h

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	Where did researchers test many bugs?
2.	How many of the bugs that were tested were drug-resistant?
3.	What have drugs been saving for many years?
4.	What could be deadly in the future?
5.	What did the WHO say a rise in antibiotic resistance could put at risk?
6.	Where is drug resistance highest besides the Eastern Mediterranean?
7.	How many reported infections were drug resistant in Africa?
8.	What are more and more bugs becoming resistant to?
9.	When did drug resistance increase by over 40 per cent?
10.	What is not happening enough?

Speaking – Staying Healthy

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ways to stay healthy at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Eat well
- Exercise
- Sleep a lot
- Meditate
- No drinking and smoking
- Health checks
- Being in nature
- Laugh

Answers – True False

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.