

UNDERSTAND

Bacteria

ANTIBIOTICS

How do antibiotics work?

History of antibiotic development

Antibiotic resistance

How did we end up here?

Why should I care?

What can I do?

RAISE AWARENESS

MEASURE

RATIONAL USE

PREVENT INFECTION

POLICY

ABOUT THE TOOLBOX

TOOLBOX – UNDERSTAND

Antibiotics

What are antibiotics?

Antibiotics are important medicines for the treatment of bacterial infections in humans and animals. Since their introduction in the 1940's antibiotics have saved countless lives and has made many medical techniques possible or safer.

Difference between antimicrobials and antibiotics

There are many different compounds that can inhibit the growth of microorganisms, and many terms that are used to categorize such compounds. 'Antimicrobials', 'antibacterials' and 'antibiotics' are commonly used terms that can sometimes be used interchangeably, but there are important differences between these words:

- *Antimicrobials* is a wider term that includes all agents that act against microorganisms, namely bacteria, fungi, viruses and protozoa.
- *Antibacterials* act only on bacteria. Broadly defined, this term encompasses all compounds that act against bacteria, including antibiotics. Today the term is sometimes used for different types of disinfectants that are not used as medicine, such as alcohol or triclosan.

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