

Why we should be concerned about antibiotic-resistant superbugs

Scientists and public-health officials are a careful bunch who don't often paint doomsday scenarios. That is, unless they're talking about the issue of antibiotic resistance. More and more, as we learn that the threat of drug-resistant superbugs could literally spell our end, antibiotic resistance has become a worry akin to climate change: an overwhelming but intangible menace that can be difficult to rally around.

In recent years, this misuse has sped up the natural process of resistance, rendering some antibiotics useless and causing experts to warn that we are at the "[dawn of a post-antibiotic era](#)" that amounts to a health "[nightmare](#)" and "[catastrophic threat](#)" on par with terrorism. For example, in the US alone antibiotic-resistant infections are associated with [23,000 deaths and 2 million illnesses](#) every year.