

READING COMPREHENSION

Topic "Antibiotics"

Article source (news): Drugs.com MedNews | 24 September 2025.

Drug-Resistant "Nightmare Bacteria" Infections Soar 70% in U.S.

Infections caused by bacteria that no longer respond to many antibiotics are climbing at an alarming pace in the U.S., new federal data shows.

Between 2019 and 2023, these hard-to-treat infections rose nearly 70%, fueled largely by strains carrying the NDM gene, according to researchers at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These so-called "nightmare bacteria" resist nearly every treatment, including carbapenems — which are considered the last line of defense. That leaves doctors with only two costly drugs that must be delivered intravenously. "The rise of NDMs in the U.S. is a grave danger and very worrisome," David Weiss, an infectious disease researcher at Emory University in Atlanta, told *The Associated Press*. He was not involved in the study.

The new CDC report — published Monday in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* — found that the rate of carbapenem-resistant infections rose from just under 2 cases per 100,000 people in 2019 to more than 3 per 100,000 in 2023. That's a 69% increase. Cases tied to the NDM gene saw the sharpest jump: From about 0.25 per 100,000 people in 2019 to 1.35 in 2023. That's a rise of more than 460%. Researchers counted 4,341 carbapenem-resistant infections across 29 states in 2023, including 1,831 NDM cases. The report did not say how many patients died.

Study co-author Dr. Maroya Walters, a CDC epidemiologist, warned that common illnesses such as urinary tract infections could become far more difficult to treat as resistant bacteria spread. Antimicrobial resistance happens when germs gain the ability to fight antibiotics. It is often caused by misuse such as taking antibiotics when they aren't needed or not finishing prescribed doses. The COVID-19 pandemic also likely played a role, experts said. "We know that there was a huge surge in antibiotic use during the pandemic, so this likely is reflected in increasing drug resistance," Dr. Jason Burnham, an infectious disease researcher at Washington University in St. Louis, told *The Associated Press*.

The CDC analysis likely undercounts the true number of infections. Many hospitals don't have the ability to run the necessary tests, and several of the most populous states like California, Florida, New York and Texas weren't included in the dataset. That means the actual number of these infections nationwide could be much higher, researchers said.

Assignments:

1. Choose the statement that best expresses the article's central idea.

- A. Hospitals have eliminated most drug-resistant infections.
- B. The number of infections that no longer respond to strong antibiotics like carbapenems has sharply increased across the U.S.
- C. Vaccines now work better than antibiotics against CRE.
- D. The article explains how to self-treat UTIs at home.

2.What is the primary goal of the author?

- A. To argue that carbapenems should be banned.
- B. To promote two new intravenous drugs.
- C. To prove that antibiotics caused the pandemic.
- D. To inform (and warn) about a rapid rise in highly drug-resistant infections in the U.S.

3.According to the article, which of the following is TRUE?

- A. Carbapenems are cheap oral drugs widely used in clinics.
- B. Drug-resistant infections in the U.S. fell between 2019 and 2023.
- C. “Nightmare bacteria” can resist nearly every available treatment.
- D. The article reports that most cases occurred in California and Texas.

4.What are carbapenems described as in the article?

- A. First-line antivirals
- B. Vaccines against CRE
- C. Last line of defense antibiotics
- D. Laboratory tests

5.Which common illness could become harder to treat as resistance spreads?

- A. Chickenpox
- B. Urinary tract infections
- C. Seasonal allergies
- D. Viral colds

6.Which factor likely contributed to rising resistance during 2020–2021?

- A. A drop in hospital admissions
- B. A surge in antibiotic use during the pandemic
- C. A ban on intravenous drugs
- D. A shortage of vaccines

7.What is the MOST LIKELY consequence of the rise in NDM-linked bacteria?

- A. Common infections like UTIs may become much harder to treat.
- B. Most resistant infections will be cured with over-the-counter pills.

- C. Doctors will stop using intravenous therapy entirely.
- D. Viral colds will become more severe.

8. Why does the article say the CDC analysis likely UNDERCOUNTS true case numbers?

- A. Many hospitals can't run the needed tests, and several populous states weren't included.
- B. The CDC analyzed only pediatric clinics.
- C. Researchers counted only fatal cases.
- D. The dataset covered years before 2010.

9. Choose the sentence that best paraphrases the original idea.

Original: *"These 'nightmare bacteria' resist nearly every treatment, including carbapenems."*

- A. The bacteria are treatable with most antibiotics.
- B. The bacteria withstand almost all available drugs, even last-line carbapenems.
- C. Carbapenems cure the bacteria in most cases.
- D. The bacteria are viruses that resist tests.

Original: *"The CDC analysis likely undercounts true infections because many hospitals cannot run required tests and several populous states were not included."*

- A. The CDC exaggerated the number of cases.
- B. The analysis covered every U.S. hospital.
- C. The dataset included only fatal cases.
- D. True infections may be higher since testing and state coverage were limited.

10. Choose the best linking word to create logical flow.

"Many hospitals lack testing capacity; _____, the true number of cases may be higher."

- A. whereas B. for example C. therefore D. despite

"Carbapenems are the last line of defense; _____, failures leave only two IV options."

- A. however B. consequently C. similarly D. nonetheless

“Overall rates rose 69%; _____, NDM-linked cases increased by more than 460%.”

A. nevertheless B. moreover C. instead D. though

11. In “a **grave** danger,” *grave* is closest in meaning to...

A. temporary

B. slight

C. serious

D. unlikely

12. A **surge** in antibiotic use refers to a...

A. steady decrease

B. small variation

C. sudden large increase

D. complete stop

13. In the article, **germs** are...

A. hospital devices

B. tiny organisms that may cause disease

C. only viruses

D. dust particles in the air

14. If a drug is given **intravenously**, it is delivered...

A. by mouth

B. through a vein

C. via the skin

D. by inhalation

15. In “the rise was **fueled** by strains carrying the NDM gene,” **fueled** means...

A. reduced by

B. ignored by

C. measured by

D. caused or driven by

Follow-up activity:

Write a summary of 100–120 words based on the article above. Follow the standard academic requirements for summary writing:

- * Begin with a clear topic sentence that includes the article's title, source, issue date, and the main idea.
- * Present the facts objectively — avoid personal opinions or examples not in the text.
- * Use your own words (paraphrase information; do not copy full sentences).
- * Include only the most important points.
- * Conclude with a summary statement showing the overall significance or concern.
- * Check your summary for clarity, coherence, and appropriate academic tone.