Read the article and match paragraph headings A-D with paragraphs 1- 4.

A How antibiotics work

B A problem for scientists

C Antibiotics and bacteria

D The first antibiotics



ANTIBIOTICS

1_____

Antibiotics are very important medicines in our lives. Doctors use them to fight many different kinds of infections. However, before 1928 scientists didn't know about them! At that time lots of people died for unimportant reasons, for example, cuts on the skin. Alexander Fleming, a Scottish scientist, discovered an antibiotic called penicillin - just by mistake! Now, we use antibiotics all the time.

2 _____

Antibiotics are chemicals that kill bacteria and stop infections. There are many different types of antibiotics because there are different types of bacteria and infections. One type of bacterium is called Gram-positive. These bacteria have very thin cell walls and antibiotics can go through the walls easily. The second is called Gram-negative and these have very thick cell walls.

3 _____

The antibiotics kill the bacteria and stop them from making new cells. They make the cell walls weak and they break. There are "broad spectrum" antibiotics that can fight all types of bacteria and doctors use them for lots of different infections. There are also "narrow spectrum" antibiotics which are good for attacking special problems.

4 _____

Today doctors are worried. Many bacteria are getting resistant - that means they get stronger and a lot of antibiotics don't kill them. This is because we use them too often. Also. we should finish all our tablets but sometimes we don't do this because we feel better. Then, the bacteria which are still in our bodies get stronger. In the past, doctors had a lot of different antibiotics to give us but now many of them don't work. Scientists need to find new antibiotics but it isn't easy. If they don't find new antibiotics, people will die for unimportant reasons again.



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