

WHY ANTIBIOTICS ARE IMPORTANT FOR...

# PRE-TERM BABIES

Pre-term babies are prone to getting severe infections, so antibiotics are an essential part of treatment.

## Pre-Term Babies and Infections

- The **more premature a baby is, the more immature its organs and immune system will be.** This is because they have not had enough time in the womb to develop fully.
- Common treatments such as ventilation and insertion of a needle to provide nutrition can **increase the risk of infection.**
- Pre-term babies are **less able to fight off infections.**
- Pre-term babies have a **higher risk of getting severe infections and a higher risk of serious complications.**
- As a result, they are also **more likely to die when an infection occurs:** deaths of 1 in 5 pre-term babies are caused by infection.
- Infections in pre-term babies can lead to **brain damage, delays in brain development, and prolonged hospital stays.**

**Antibiotics are crucial for controlling and preventing these infections and improving survival rates.**

Most pre-term babies will need antibiotics to survive. Antibiotic resistance means that current antibiotics may not work. In addition, few new treatments are being developed. This means that damaging long-term complications in pre-term babies may become more common, and survival rates may decrease, because doctors may not be able to control infections.

**It is VITAL that we preserve our antibiotics, minimise the spread of bacteria, and protect pre-term babies from catching antibiotic-resistant infections.**

1. **Don't ask and don't expect antibiotics** for colds, sore throats, or flu—these are caused by viruses so antibiotics don't work.
2. **Only** take antibiotics given to you by your doctor and **EXACTLY** as written on the bottle and always **complete the full course.**
3. **Never** give your antibiotics to other people.

