



News Release

Ineffective antibiotics and vaccination reluctance could provoke pneumonia outbreak

Patients had better get sharp at getting pneumonia jabs – or risk a spike in the deadly infection.

That's the warning from health charity **Antibiotic Research UK (ANTRUK)**, who say that ineffective antibiotics allied to a reluctance to get vaccinated, could mean Britain breaks into the top 20 countries globally for deaths from the condition.

And that is particularly the case for babies, older folks and patients with ongoing conditions in the North West and East of England.

“The widespread use of antibiotics in ill patients meant hopes were high that pneumonia would have been eradicated by now” said Professor Colin Garner, Chief Executive of ANTRUK, “but with American research showing that one in four patients are not being cured by an initial dose of antibiotics (1), I really think we ought to be worried. A greater mistrust of vaccines doesn't help either and I would urge anyone eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine (PCV) to make sure they receive it – now.”

The so-called PCV vaccine was introduced in Britain in 2006. It is estimated that it has prevented nearly 40,000 cases of pneumonia and 2,000 deaths. It has been developed to combat new strains, and is available free to:

- Babies
- Adults aged 65 or over
- Anyone with a long-term health condition

Pneumonia can be caused by a number of different bacteria, viruses and fungi. Those bacteria may also cause infections such as sepsis, and spark serious, life-threatening conditions including meningitis. The number of people dying in Britain per head of population from pneumonia is higher than that recorded in Ireland, Azerbaijan, Venezuela and Panama (2). Hotspots for pneumonia in the UK include the North West and East of England regions, with Scotland recording a lower rate of the condition.

Unlike the flu vaccine, the pneumonia jabs are not issued yearly – rather they are dependent on your age and your health (for more information on eligibility, go to <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pneumococcal-vaccination/>).

“The World Health Organisation lists vaccines mistrust as one of their top ten threats to public health” continued Colin Garner, “this is a deadly cocktail when combined with the increasing ineffectiveness of antibiotics. Until we properly invest in new medications, prevention is better than cure and people in vulnerable groups need to get their pneumococcal vaccinations. The NHS also needs to promote them; and I was staggered to learn recently that patients weren't aware they even existed. This could mean a pneumonia epidemic if we are not extremely careful.”

ANTRUK is the only charity in the world solely dedicated to fighting antibiotic resistance. It also supports people and their families coping with the often heart-breaking effects of superbugs such as MRSA.

To donate to the charity, visit <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/2680#/DonationDetails>

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For further information

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Learn more about Antibiotic Research UK (ANTRUK) at www.antibioticresearch.org.uk

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Sources:

(1) <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/antibiotics-surprisingly-ineffective-on-pneumonia>