



## **Antimicrobial Resistance: A Women's Health Problem**

### **PASTEUR Act: A Women's Health Solution**

Women in the United States are facing increased health risks due to drug-resistant bacteria, other resistant microbes and the lack of novel antibiotics.

Drug-resistant bacteria are a particular threat to women because they are often the cause of urinary tract infections and sexually transmitted infections, cancer-related infections (with breast cancer being one of the forms of cancer in which infections are most common) and sepsis, which is a leading cause of maternal mortality.

Safe and effective antibiotics are the foundation of medical advances in modern medicine. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and a lack of new antibiotics jeopardize this progress.

### **PASTEUR Protects Women's Health**

Congress should enact the bipartisan PASTEUR Act, which establishes a subscription program to provide federal contracts for critically needed novel antimicrobials instead of paying for the volume of antibiotics used through Medicare and other federal payers.

Because antibiotics are typically taken for a short duration and must be used judiciously to protect their effectiveness, high sales volume of a new drug is unlikely. About 95% of antibiotics in development are being studied by small

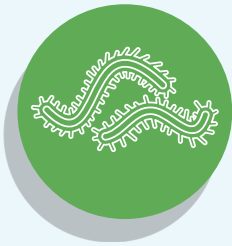
companies, many of which struggle to stay in business.<sup>1</sup>

Under PASTEUR, novel antimicrobials would be accessible at no cost to patients through Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Affairs and other federal payers. The bill also would establish a new HHS grant program to support hospital antimicrobial stewardship programs, which guide appropriate antibiotic use, improve patient outcomes and decrease resistance.

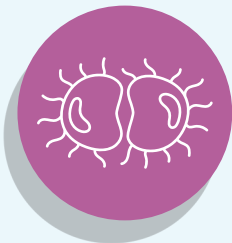
## How AMR Threatens Women's Health



Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are the most common outpatient infections in the United States and the most common bacterial infection that women develop during pregnancy. Half of all **women will experience a UTI in their lifetime.**<sup>2</sup> **More than 92% of bacteria that cause UTIs are resistant to at least one common antimicrobial, and almost 80% are resistant to at least two.**<sup>3</sup> UTIs account for more than 100,000 hospitalizations in the United States each year, costing about \$1.6 billion.<sup>4</sup>



Sepsis—the body's response to untreated infections that can result in organ failure and death—is the **second leading cause of pregnancy-related deaths.**<sup>5</sup> AMR exacerbates the risk of sepsis by making infections much more difficult to treat. Between 2014 and 2017, infection or sepsis caused 12.7% of pregnancy-related deaths in the United States, with Black women facing a heightened risk.



**In the United States, there are an estimated 1.14 million gonorrhea infections annually, and an estimated 550,000 are antibiotic resistant.**<sup>6</sup> Syphilis cases have increased nearly 32% from 2020 to 2021,<sup>7</sup> with growing resistance.<sup>8</sup> Globally, one study found a 50% increase in a specific syphilis mutation that makes syphilis antibiotic resistant. This is problematic with the steady increase in STIs such as gonorrhea and syphilis in older populations, including middle-aged women, who are unaware of their susceptibility.<sup>9</sup>

### Learn More

For more information, visit [ValueofID.org](https://www.valueofid.org).

### References

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2021/03/tracking-the-global-pipeline-of-antibiotics-in-development>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3749018/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6436442/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.medstarhealth.org/blog/cost-burden-antibiotic-resistant-uti>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/pregnancy-mortality-surveillance-system.htm#trends>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/pdf/threats-report/gonorrhea-508.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2023/s0411-sti.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9785152/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.healthywomen.org/your-health/sexual-health/youre-never-too-old-to-get-an-std>