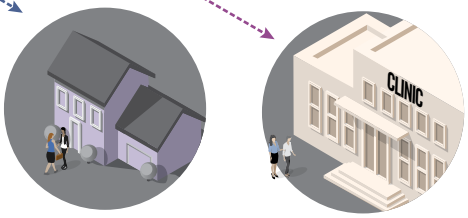
A Complex Web: Everything is Connected

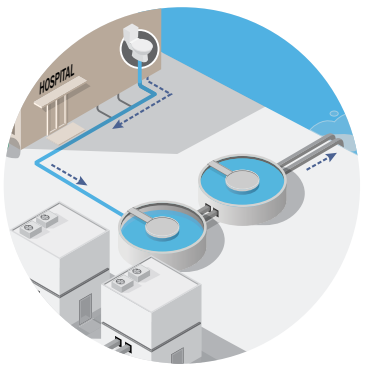
Healthcare Facilities

Antibiotic-resistant germs, including new and emerging resistance, can spread within and between healthcare facilities. These germs can cause infections in patients, called healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), and can spread to the community or environment (soil, water).

- Antibiotics save lives. However, any time antibiotics are used, the drugs can cause side effects and contribute to the development of antibiotic resistance.
- Germs can survive in plumbing (e.g., sink drains, toilets). The germs can splash back onto people, or move to wastewater treatment plants.
- Without appropriate infection control actions, germs can spread to people from other people on surfaces like bedrails or the hands of healthcare workers.
- Procedures and medical devices (e.g., catheters) help treat patients, but can be pathways for germs to enter the body and cause infections.



- Germs can move with patients when they are transferred from one healthcare facility to another, or go home.
- Germs can cause infections in the community when healthcare settings do not stop their spread.



- Human waste (poop) can carry traces of previously consumed antibiotics and antibiotic-resistant germs. Waste goes to treatment plants and is released as treated waste water. This can contribute to antibiotic resistance in the environment, including contaminating lakes and streams.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CS314682