

# AURA 2023 Highlights

## Aged care



The *Fifth Australian report on antimicrobial use and resistance in human health* (AURA 2023) includes data analyses from the Antimicrobial Use and Resistance in Australia Surveillance System (AURA). AURA 2023 data shows that antimicrobials continue to be prescribed at high rates in Australia, including in aged care.

This resource highlights key findings from AURA 2023 and priorities for action to support aged care services and clinicians.

## Key findings

### Antimicrobial use

The 2021 [Aged Care National Antimicrobial Prescribing Survey](#) data showed that on the survey day, 14% of residents were receiving antimicrobials. There was a steady increase from 2017 (9%) to 2021.

The survey showed that antimicrobials were often prescribed inappropriately, with results including:

- Antimicrobials were used for prolonged durations (more than six months) for 42% of prescriptions, which is rarely recommended
- Just over one-third (35%) of antimicrobials prescribed were for PRN (as required) administration, which is inconsistent with guidelines, and these were frequently topical antimicrobials
- Just over one-fifth (22%) of all antimicrobials prescribed were for prophylactic use
- Antimicrobials were frequently prescribed for skin, soft tissue or unspecified mucosal indications or cystitis that can often be effectively prevented through hydration management and adherence to infection prevention and control guidelines.

### Antimicrobial resistance and infection

While the overall number of antimicrobial resistant (AMR) infections reported in aged care homes was low, AMR rates were as high as, or higher than, rates in hospitals for *Enterobacteriales* and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- ⇒ Reducing PRN and prophylactic prescriptions as they are not consistent with guidelines.
- ⇒ Reducing the use of topical antifungals in aged care, which provide limited benefits, increase the risk of AMR, potentially delay wound healing and are an unnecessary expense for residents.
- ⇒ Promoting appropriate personal and clinical care for residents that is consistent with antimicrobial stewardship requirements of the [Aged Care Quality Standards](#), and the [strengthened Standards](#) in development.
- ⇒ Supporting effective infection prevention and control in aged care, including the fundamentals of standard precautions such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, environmental cleaning, personal protective equipment, aseptic technique, and safe handling of waste, sharps and linen.
- ⇒ Providing ongoing surveillance of infections and antimicrobial use in aged care.
- ⇒ Supporting aged care services to use data on infections, antimicrobial use and AMR to develop strategies to prevent and control infections that may affect older people, such as skin and urinary tract infections.

For more information, visit: [safetyandquality.gov.au/AURA2023](https://safetyandquality.gov.au/AURA2023)



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