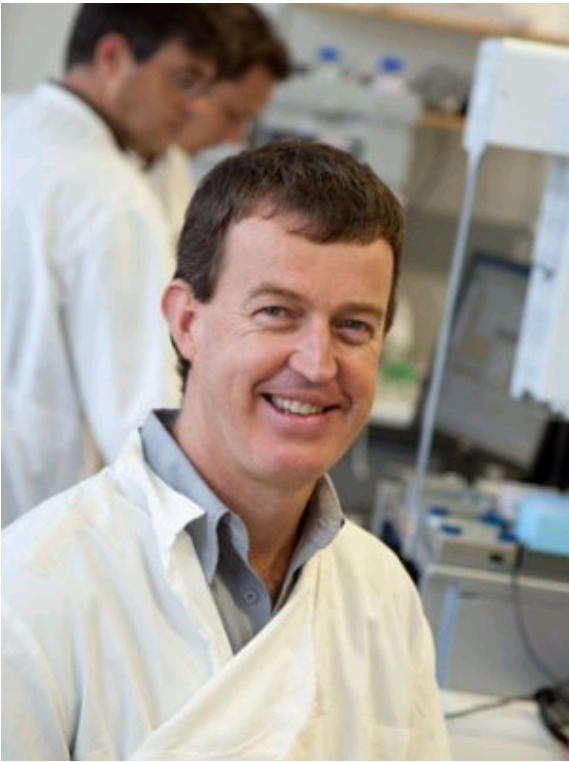


## How to stop superbugs in Antibiotic Awareness Week



Professor Matt Cooper

15 November 2012

A University of Queensland researcher is calling on all Australians to do their part to reduce the spread of superbugs as we mark [Antibiotic Awareness Week](#) this week, November 12-18.

Antibiotic Awareness Week is a worldwide initiative that seeks to raise the profile of these important drugs and what we can do to stop bacteria becoming resistant.

Professor Matt Cooper from UQ's Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB) is developing new antibiotics to combat superbugs, which are bacteria that are resistant to multiple antibiotics.

"The majority of antibiotics are actually derived from other species of bacteria," Professor Cooper said.

"Billions of years ago, bacterial species were engaged in an arms race against each other and the chemicals they developed to kill one another have been modified into today's antibiotics," he said.

"These antibiotics are a precious natural resource and should be treated as such."

Overuse of antibiotics is one of the key reasons that bacteria develop resistance and become superbugs.

More than 19 million prescriptions for antibiotics are written each year in Australia, one of the highest rates in the world.

National Prescribing Service (NPS) Medicinewise is organising Antibiotic Awareness Week in Australia, with information on antibiotic resistance and a pledge to use antibiotics wisely.

Australians can help by:

- Visiting the NPS website for information and to sign the pledge:  
[http://www.nps.org.au/bemedicinewise/antibiotic\\_resistance](http://www.nps.org.au/bemedicinewise/antibiotic_resistance)
- Signing a petition organised by Antibiotic Action, a UK-based group: <http://antibiotic-action.com/>
- Learning about better handwashing to stop the spread of infectious disease:  
[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Handwashing\\_why\\_it%27s\\_important?open](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Handwashing_why_it%27s_important?open)

The IMB is a research institute at UQ that aims to improve quality of life by advancing personalised medicine, drug discovery and biotechnology.

For more information, to donate to or collaborate with Professor Cooper's lab, please call (07) 3346 2132 or email [advancement@imb.uq.edu.au](mailto:advancement@imb.uq.edu.au)

Media contact: Bronwyn Adams, IMB Communications Officer, 0418 575 247 or 07 3346 2134

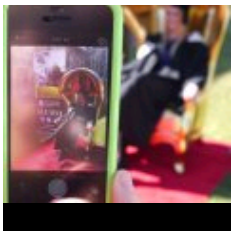
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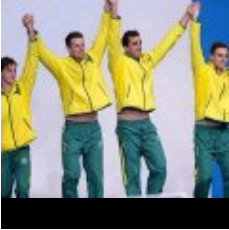
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