

# Disinfectant in soaps creates antibiotic-resistant superbugs

◆ Superbugs are becoming more resistant to antibiotics because of a common disinfectant used in many soaps and toothpastes, suggests research.

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are usually thought to be the result of overuse of antibiotics in humans and meat animals.

But British researchers have discovered a link between antibiotic resistance and triclosan, which is used in soaps, toothpaste and other domestic products.

Until now it was believed bacteria were defenceless

against triclosan. The chemical affects a range of bacteria and fungal infections, and scientists thought it had too broad an effect to allow bugs to develop immunity.

In lab tests on the stomach bug E.coli, bacteria that mutated to become resistant to a class of broad-spectrum antibiotics known as quinolones also became more resistant to triclosan.

It is thought that as bacteria become resistant to disinfectants, this in turn increases their ability to resist the drugs.

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