



## ANTIBIOTICS CREATING SUPER BUGS?

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Penicillin, introduced in 1943, became an instantaneous miracle of modern medicine – the first drug that could kill a wide range of bugs with no adverse effects on the body. But even at that time, Alexander Fleming, the British bacteriologist who discovered Penicillin warned that misuse of the drug could lead to the mutant bacterial bugs that would defy it. And in fact by 1946, an estimated 14% of the staphylococcus strains isolated in a London hospital had developed resistance to penicillin.

The discovery of penicillin led to the discovery of more than one hundred other antibiotics and with a somewhat shortsighted view, the Government decided the battle of the bugs was won.

Bug research was de-emphasized and new bacterial bug killers became a thing of the past.

However, the mutant bacterial bugs, also known as super bugs, have begun to build in strength and spread.

25 to 45 percent of the 190 million annual doses of antibiotics delivered in hospitals are unnecessary and may serve to strengthen the super bugs.

SOURCE: The New York Times Magazine, August 2, 1998.