

Press Release

Antimicrobial resistance remains a major health threat – Europe turns to young people to help tackle it

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The European Commission brings '[Beat the Bug](#)' back to Fortnite. The game, which goes live on 09 October 2026, encourages players to work together to stop antibiotic-resistant bacteria from spreading.

Gamers have ten minutes of pure tactical chaos to build a containment zone to stop the bugs from spreading. Beat the Bug contains no unskippable cut scenes, no long text walls, and no boring lectures. It's all about applying the tools at your disposal – as well as your skill – to prevent the spread of antibiotic-resistant 'bugs'. One missing wall though, and the mutation wins.

"Antimicrobial resistance continues to present a significant health threat to Europeans," said Commission Director General for Health and Food Safety Sandra Gallina. "However, this is a challenge that we are addressing through positive, proactive action, both individually and collectively. The return of 'Beat the Bug' to Fortnite is a great opportunity to spread this message, inform in particular young people about how they can protect themselves and their loved ones, and of course, to have fun."

A global health challenge

Beat the Bug highlights a pressing global health concern. Antibiotics are powerful tools, but they only work against bacteria – not viruses like colds and flu. Using them in the wrong situation means that resistant bugs get more chances to spread.

This has real health consequences. Bacterial antimicrobial resistance (AMR) was estimated to be associated with more than 4.7 million deaths globally in 2021¹. Around one in six laboratory-confirmed bacterial infections worldwide were found to be resistant to antibiotics in 2023². AMR presents a particular threat to society's most vulnerable – the old, hospital patients and newborns, for example.

The EU is strengthening AMR knowledge among citizens and healthcare professionals – the recent Council Recommendation on addressing AMR through a One Health approach³ is a good example of this. Beat the Bug is part of this strategy.

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antimicrobial-resistance>

² <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antimicrobial-resistance>

³ https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/council-recommendation-stepping-eu-actions-combat-antimicrobial-resistance-one-health-approach_en

Cooperation across borders

A very large proportion of Europeans have taken antibiotics without justification (i.e. for viral infections or symptoms only) or for illnesses like pneumonia or bronchitis, which need a test to confirm the exact cause. According to the Eurobarometer survey, only half of respondents knew that antibiotics are ineffective against viruses⁴.

AMR does not respect borders and requires global coordination to be effectively contained. This is why Beat the Bug encourages gamers from different countries to team up and share their knowledge.

Promoting practical solutions

Beat the Bug promotes solutions to this health challenge. There are tools at our disposal we can use to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our communities. For example, only take antibiotics if they are prescribed for you by a healthcare professional. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure how to take them. Never share antibiotics and always dispose of any leftovers with care, using local dedicated schemes.

As with most health threats, prevention is the best course of action to avoid the need to take antibiotics. This includes simple things like washing your hands after going to the toilet and before eating food. Wash fruits and vegetables and use clean kitchen tools. Stay home when you are sick.

Beat the Bug is a great opportunity to learn more about AMR and the preventive actions we can take, while having fun. Over 500 000 V-Bucks are up for grabs. Will your region contain the mutation or let it spread? Join the showdown, protect your region and stop resistant bugs from spreading. The leaderboard will be frozen on 18 November 2026, to mark European Antibiotic Awareness Day.

Beat the Bug: <https://www.fortnite.com/@virstate/2536-2666-4953>

Video Generic teaser:

Horizontal - <https://youtu.be/q5bVA2zBm2s>

Vertical - https://youtube.com/shorts/Ew5cHURS_G4

Video V-Buck focussed (contest):

Horizontal - <https://youtu.be/GFmZ9HGPvxM>

Vertical - <https://youtube.com/shorts/WY3jaG2T-IU>

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⁴ <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2632>