

Bacteria: A Very Short Introduction

By Sebastian G. B. Amyes

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- What do we consider are the biggest threats to human health?
- Are bacteria essential for the air that we breathe?
- Could we ever again have a bacterial epidemic as devastating as the Black Death?
- How important are bacteria in producing food that we eat?
- Could we dispose of human waste without bacteria?
- Is it possible to produce synthetic bacteria and thus create life?
- Could bacteria have come from another planet, such as Mars?
- Do bacteria kill more people than cancer?
- Is antibiotic resistance a serious threat and are there solutions that will enable us to cure infections in the future?
- Is there any medical value to taking probiotics or foodstuffs, such as yogurt, or are they just a fad?
- How did the Romans use bacteria in their horticulture?
- Is there a risk from bacteria toxins as weapons of war?
- How have our bodies become adept at avoiding most bacterial infections?
- Would you really want Botox injections if you knew how poisonous the toxin was?
- What is a “flesh-eating” bacterium and do they really “eat” flesh?
- Why did colonisation of the West Indies lead to widespread tooth decay?
- How do bacteria form an essential part of our own cells?
- Are there still bacteria on this planet that we do not yet know exist?
- How did bacteria directly encourage the Houses of Parliament in London to sanction the building of sewers in the 19th century?
- How many years have antibiotics added to our lives?

Other books by Sebastian G. B. Amyes

Antibacterial Chemotherapy (Oxford University Press, 2010)

Magic Bullets, Lost Horizons (Taylor and Francis, 2001)

Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (Martin Dunitz, 1996)

Further Reading

A list of further reading can be found on pages 130-132 of the *Very Short Introduction*