

What are the symptoms of **A N T H R A X**

Inhalation anthrax initially resembles a common cold. Symptoms can begin within 7 days of infection and may include:

Fever (temperature greater than 100 degrees F). The fever may be accompanied by **chills** or **night sweats**.

Flu-like symptoms

Sore throat, followed by **difficulty swallowing**, **enlarged lymph nodes**, **headache**, **nausea**, **loss of appetite**, **abdominal distress**, **vomiting**, or **diarrhea**.

Sores on face, arms or hands that start as **raised bumps** and develop into **painless ulcers with a black area in the center**.

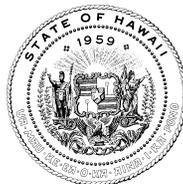
After several days, the symptoms may progress to **severe breathing problems** and **shock**. Inhalation anthrax is usually fatal if left untreated.

For more information, call

Aloha United Way

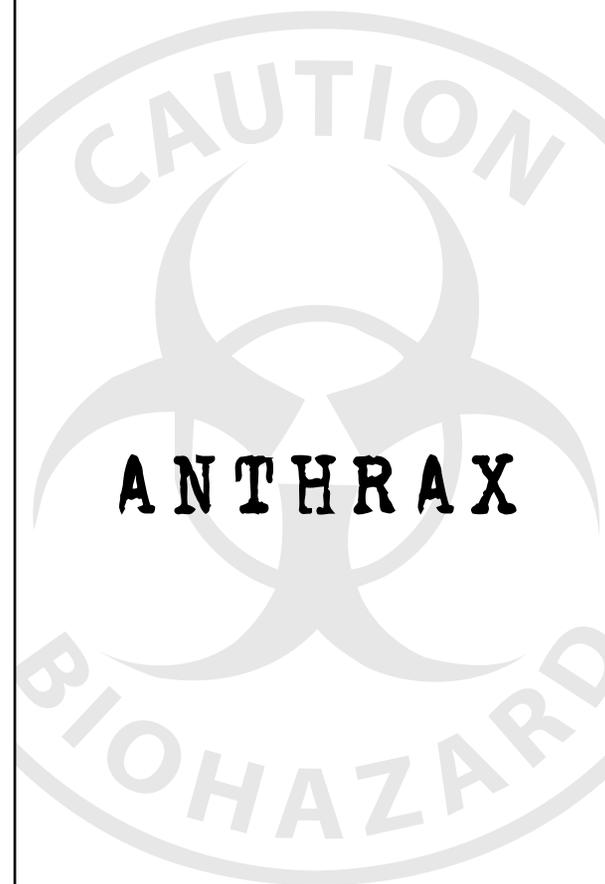


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What is anthrax?

Anthrax is a serious infectious disease caused by the spore-forming bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. Anthrax infection can occur in three forms:

- **Cutaneous:** When the bacterium enters a cut or abrasion on the skin.
- **Inhalation:** Caused by breathing in anthrax bacteria or spores. The spores are too small to be seen by the naked eye and they have no characteristic color, smell or taste.
- **Gastrointestinal:** When anthrax contaminated food is eaten.

How is anthrax spread?

Anthrax is not contagious; the illness cannot be spread from person to person. Humans can become infected with anthrax by handling products from infected animals or by inhaling anthrax spores from contaminated animal products. Eating undercooked meat from infected animals can also spread anthrax. Anthrax spores can also be used as a bioterrorist weapon.



What are the symptoms of anthrax?

Cutaneous anthrax begins as a raised itchy bump that resembles an insect bite but within 1–2 days develops into painless ulcers, usually 1–3 cm in diameter, with a characteristic black area in the center. Lymph glands in the adjacent area may swell. Deaths from cutaneous anthrax are rare because the illness can be cured with appropriate antibiotics. About 20% of untreated cases could result in death.

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- Fever (temperature greater than 100 degrees F). The fever may be accompanied by chills or night sweats.

- Flu-like symptoms.
- Sore throat, followed by difficulty swallowing, enlarged lymph nodes, headache, nausea, loss of appetite, abdominal distress, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Sores on face, arms or hands that start as raised bumps and develop into painless ulcers with a black area in the center.



After several days, the symptoms may progress to severe breathing problems and shock. Inhalation anthrax is usually fatal if left untreated.

(A runny nose is a rare feature of inhalation anthrax exposure. A person who has a runny nose along with other common flu-like symptoms is more likely to have the common cold than to have anthrax.)

Gastrointestinal anthrax is characterized by an acute inflammation of the intestinal tract. Initial signs of nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, and fever are followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea.

How is anthrax exposure treated?

In persons exposed to anthrax, infection can be prevented with doctor prescribed antibiotic treatment for 60 days. Early antibiotic treatment of anthrax is essential—any delay lessens chances for survival.

Is there a vaccination for anthrax?

A vaccine has been developed for anthrax; however, it is primarily given to military personnel. Vaccination involves multiple injections over an extended period and is recommended only for those at high risk, such as workers in research laboratories that handle anthrax bacteria routinely. The antibiotics used after exposure are very effective in preventing anthrax disease from occurring.

How do you know if you were exposed?

You cannot see or smell anthrax. You won't know exposure has taken place until symptoms appear, up to 7 days after exposure. Health officials will provide information on possible exposure. Monitor television and radio or call 211 for information on possible exposure.

What should you do if you were exposed to anthrax?

Call your doctor. Tell your care provider of the possible exposure. A doctor can prescribe antibiotics. Treatment is most effective when started early. Limit possible exposure of others by isolating exposed items and areas that may still contain anthrax spores. Wash hands with soap and water.

Where is anthrax found and how is it used?

Anthrax most commonly occurs in wild and domestic animals (cattle, sheep, goats, camels, antelopes, and other herbivores), but it can also occur in humans when they are exposed to infected animals, tissue from infected animals or when anthrax spores are used as a bioterrorist weapon.

Why are there concerns about anthrax being used as a bioterrorism agent?

Anthrax spores have already been used as a bioterrorist weapon. In 2001 anthrax spores were intentionally placed in letters and distributed through the postal system, causing 22 cases of anthrax, including 5 deaths.

Can pets and other animals get anthrax?

Yes. Pets and farm animals (except fish, birds and lizards) can get anthrax.

If you think your pet or animal was exposed call your veterinarian.

