

# **Anthrax Exposure Extended and Short Messages**

## **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

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Grade Level: 7.8

## **Anthrax Exposure Extended Message**

### **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

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#### ***What is happening?***

- This is an urgent health message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Please pay careful attention to this message to protect your health and that of others.
- Public health officials believe that the spores that cause anthrax disease may have been deliberately released in the *xxx area*.
- At this time, we do not know the extent or source of the anthrax release. Local, state, and federal officials, including HHS, FBI, and Homeland Security, are working together. Updated announcements will be made as soon as these officials know more.
- Anthrax disease is not known to spread from person to person so people do not have to avoid contact with one another.
- Based on what we know now, only those people who were in *xxx area* on *xxx date* are at risk for getting sick.
- There are treatments for anthrax. Treatment should start **as soon as possible** after exposure to anthrax.
- HHS is working to get treatments to the people who need them.
- We have challenges ahead, and we are working to find out more about this outbreak. By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- For more information about anthrax, visit the HHS website at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) anthrax page at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest updates.
- This message contains additional information that can help protect your health and the health of others.

### ***What is anthrax?***

- Anthrax is a disease caused by bacteria that form spores. When a person comes into contact with those spores, they may become ill. The spores can infect your skin, lungs, or digestive system.
- Some forms of anthrax bacteria exist in nature and can cause disease. It can also be spread on purpose as a powder or through the air. The spores that cause anthrax disease may have been deliberately released in the *xxx area*.
- Antibiotics are used to treat all three types of anthrax in your skin, lungs, or digestive system. Early diagnosis and treatment with the right antibiotic is important.

### ***What are the symptoms of anthrax?***

- After contact with the anthrax spores, symptoms of anthrax may appear within 7 days.
- Depending on how a person comes into contact with the spores, three types of illness can occur.
  1. When a person breathes in the anthrax spores, this is called inhalational anthrax and is the most serious form of the disease. The first symptoms are like those of the flu; later symptoms may include severe breathing problems.
  2. When anthrax spores enter a cut on the skin, this is called cutaneous anthrax and it responds well to treatment. Symptoms include sores or blisters. Initially, these sores or blisters may look like an insect bite.
  3. When a person eats or drinks anthrax spores, this is called gastrointestinal anthrax. Symptoms include nausea, loss of appetite, and diarrhea.

### ***Can it be spread from person to person?***

- The anthrax *illness* does not spread from person to person.
- People with suspected illness do not need to be quarantined or isolated.
- Based on what we know now, only those people who were in *xxx area* on *xxx date* are at risk for getting anthrax.

### ***What to do if you have symptoms of anthrax***

- If you have been near the *xxx area* and you think your symptoms might be due to exposure to anthrax, begin treatment as soon as possible.
- Antibiotics can be used to treat all types of anthrax. However, the right antibiotic must be given quickly to help you recover.
- Call your doctor or local public health department at *xxx-xxx-xxxx*. Describe your symptoms and explain that you think you might have been exposed to anthrax and also what symptoms you have.

### ***What to do if you were at or near the xxx location where anthrax might have been released***

- If you have been near *xxx location* on *xxx date*, call your doctor or local public health department at *xxx-xxx-xxxx* for specific instructions on where you can go to see if you have been exposed to anthrax.
- If contact with anthrax is suspected, antibiotics may help prevent you from getting sick or lessen the illness if it does appear. Treatment may include preventive care for a couple of

months with antibiotics and may be combined with a vaccine to help prevent anthrax infection.

- Health authorities will help determine if you need antibiotics or other medical care. Getting antibiotics or vaccine is not recommended if you have not been exposed to anthrax.

***What to do if you were not near the xxx area where anthrax may have been released but are concerned about it anyway***

- It is natural to be concerned or afraid at a time like this. If you do not have any symptoms and were not near the xxx area on xxx date, you most likely have not had contact with anthrax and do not have anthrax disease.
- By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- Stay informed by turning to the radio, television, or Internet news for updated health and safety announcements.
- With your cooperation, we will have the best chance to protect the health and safety of our community.
- Health authorities are working to help people who may have been exposed to anthrax, particularly those who have symptoms of anthrax.

***How can you protect yourself?***

- If you see a strange package, envelope, or other container that you suspect may contain anthrax, do not open it. Leave the area and stop others from entering the area. Call 911 or the local police at xxx-xxx-xxxx for more instructions.
- A vaccine exists to prevent anthrax, but it is not recommended for the general public since few people are normally at risk for anthrax. It may be given to people who have been exposed to anthrax in this current situation.
- Stay informed. Listen for announcements from public health officials about what areas to avoid.

***What is being done and how to get more information***

- Local, state and federal officials, including HHS, FBI, and Homeland Security, are working together. Updated announcements will be made as soon as these officials know more.
- Public health officials will share information and give more instructions as the situation develops and they learn more.
- Go to [\[insert local media information here\]](#) to hear the latest information from local officials.
- For more information on anthrax, visit the HHS website at <http://www.hhs.gov>, visit the CDC's anthrax page at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest updates.

**Grade Level: 8.0**

## **Anthrax Exposure Short Message**

### **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

- This is an urgent health message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- Public health officials believe that the spores that cause anthrax may have been deliberately released in the *xxx area*.
- At this time, we do not know the extent or source of the anthrax release. Local, state, and federal officials, including HHS, FBI, and Homeland Security, are working together. Updated announcements will be made as soon as these officials know more.
- Anthrax is a disease that affects both humans and animals. In people, it can be caused by spores that are released as a powder or into the air. The spores are not known to spread from person to person.
- Based on what we know now, only those people who were in *xxx area* on *xxx date* are at risk for getting sick.
- After contact with the anthrax spores, symptoms of anthrax usually develop within 7 days.
- Depending on how a person comes into contact with the spores, three types of illness can occur.
  1. When a person breathes in the anthrax spores, first symptoms are like those of the flu. Later symptoms may include severe breathing problems.
  2. When anthrax spores enter a cut on the skin, symptoms include sores or blisters and may look like an insect bite.
  3. When a person eats or drinks anthrax spores, symptoms include nausea, loss of appetite, and diarrhea.
- There are treatments for anthrax, and HHS is working to get these treatments to the people who need them.
- We have challenges ahead, and we are working to find out more about this outbreak. By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- Go to [insert local media information here] to hear the latest information from local officials.
- For more information about anthrax, visit the HHS website at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the CDC's anthrax page at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest updates.