Preventing Anthrax After Exposure: Options

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Fact:

To date, no cases of inhalational anthrax have occurred among 10,000 persons for whom post-exposure antimicrobial treatment was recommended or made available.
Key Questions

• Do spores persist after antibiotics, and if so, will inhalational anthrax develop?

• Does adding vaccination / extra days of antibiotics decrease the chance of inhalational anthrax
  – among exposed people who took all 60 days of antibiotics?
  – among exposed people who did not take all 60 days of antibiotics?
Preventing Anthrax After Exposure: Options

- Initial recommendation: Antibiotics for 60 days
- New Option 1: Antibiotics for 100 days
- New Option 2: 40 more days antibiotics plus vaccine (3 doses over 4 weeks)
Anthrax Prevention Treatment Decisions

Treatment Benefit

Treatment Risks

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Individual Risk: Tips for Workers
Things that might mean higher risk

Exposure History
- Direct contact with anthrax powder
- Presence in the immediate area where anthrax-containing envelope was opened
- Presence in an area with widespread environmental contamination
- Presence in a site where someone acquired inhalational anthrax
Individual Risk: Tips for Workers

Things that might mean higher risk

Exposure History

- Working in an area where an anthrax envelope was processed using mechanical postal equipment
- Working in an area where an anthrax envelope was riffled
Individual Risk: Tips for Workers

Things that might mean higher risk

Not Taking Antibiotics
- People who couldn’t take all 60 days of antibiotics
- People who missed many doses of antibiotics
**Individual Risk: Tips for Workers**

**Things that might mean lower risk**

**Exposure History**
- No known direct exposure to anthrax powder
- Presence in an area with only focal contamination
- Short time in contaminated area
- Member of a group with:
  - no inhalational anthrax
  - delayed antibiotics but no inhalational anthrax
Facts about Antibiotics

• To date, no cases of inhalation anthrax have occurred among 10,000 persons for whom antibiotic treatment was recommended or made available
• Side effects are common, but not usually serious
• Taking all 60 days of antibiotics is difficult
Facts about Anthrax Vaccine

• What we know was learned from vaccination of healthy military personnel
• Vaccine is effective, though not 100%
• Vaccine has short-term side effects
  – Most are local and go away in days or weeks
  – Serious reactions have been rare
• Long-term vaccine evaluation is incomplete
Vaccine Side Effects

Mild Problems

• Soreness, redness, or itching where the shot was given (about 1 out of 10 men, about 1 out of 6 women)
• A lump where the shot was given (about 1 person out of 2)
• Muscle aches or joint aches (about 1 person out of 5)
• Headaches (about 1 person out of 5)
• Fatigue (about 1 out of 15 men, about 1 out of 6 women)
• Chills or fever (about 1 person out of 20)
• Nausea (about 1 person out of 20)
Vaccine Side Effects

Moderate Problems
• Large areas of redness where the shot was given (up to 1 person out of 20)

Severe Problems
• Serious allergic reaction (very rare - less than once in 100,000 doses)
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Post-exposure Treatment Decisions

Treatment Benefit vs. Treatment Risks
Some Ways to Learn More

• Ask your doctor or other health care provider.
• Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  • Call 1-888-246-2675 (English)
  • Call 1-888-246-2857 (Español)
• Visit the CDC’s website at
• http://www.bt.cdc.gov