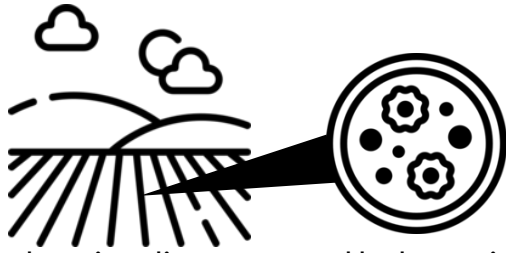


# Anthrax

## Fact Sheet



Anthrax is a disease caused by bacteria called *Bacillus anthracis*. It can live for years in the environment in tiny shells, called spores.



Anthrax is on the US list of potential bioweapons. During the anthrax attacks on the US in 2001, people got anthrax from handling mail with spores in it.

## Symptoms

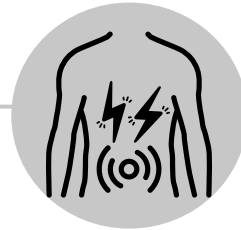
Symptoms of anthrax depend on how a person becomes infected. All types of anthrax can spread throughout the body if untreated. Anthrax can cause serious illness or death. Symptoms can show up 1 day to more than 2 months after infection. Common symptoms include:



Fever and Chills



Nausea and Vomiting



Abdominal Pain



Headache



People who get infected through a skin wound get **cutaneous (skin) anthrax**. These people can get small, itchy blisters that turn into a painless skin sore with a black center.



People who get infected by breathing in the spores get **inhalation anthrax**. These people can have:

- chest discomfort
- shortness of breath
- cough
- sweats
- body ache
- extreme tiredness



People who get infected by eating or drinking contaminated food or water get **gastrointestinal anthrax**. These people can have:

- sore throat
- hoarse voice
- diarrhea (sometimes bloody)
- swelling of the abdomen

# Who is at risk?



Anthrax is rare in the US, but some people are at higher risk than others:

- People who work with animals or handle animal products
- Mail handlers, military personnel, and laboratory workers
- Travelers



Talk to a health care provider right away if:

- You think you have anthrax symptoms.
- You think you were exposed to anthrax. Antibiotics may prevent illness if taken before symptoms start.

# Prevention



If you travel to an area where anthrax is common:

- Avoid contact with livestock, animal products, and animal carcasses.
- Do not eat raw or undercooked meat.



People have gotten anthrax from imported animal hides used to make drums in the US. Use caution when buying animal hide drums.



A vaccine is available for anthrax, but **only for certain at-risk groups**. This includes people in the military and laboratory workers.

# For More Information, Visit:



[www.cdc.gov/anthrax/](http://www.cdc.gov/anthrax/)

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.