

What is Anthrax?

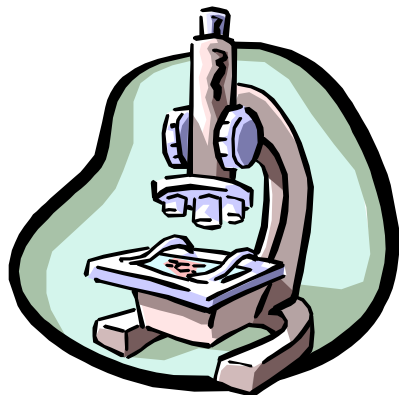
Anthrax is a colorless, odorless, tasteless bacterium that protects itself from sunlight, heat and disinfectant by forming a protective coat. With this coat the bacterium is called a "spore." The spores are so small that even an infectious dose - between 8,000 and 10,000 spores — is smaller than a speck of dust.

If inhaled, anthrax spores can germinate and lead to infection within one to 60 days. This is pulmonary anthrax.

Other forms include cutaneous, skin infections which occur if anthrax spores come in contact with a cut or other opening in the skin.

Another form of anthrax develops in the intestine of those who eat improperly cooked meat of animals that have been infected with anthrax.

All three forms of anthrax disease are caused by the same bacterium — *Bacillus anthracis*.



Advice to the Public

How to Handle Anthrax and Other Biological Agent Threats.

Do Not Panic

- 1. Anthrax organisms can cause infection in the skin, gastrointestinal system, or the lungs. To do so, the organism must be rubbed into abraded skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine, aerosolized mist. Disease can be prevented after exposure to the anthrax spores by early treatment with the appropriate antibiotics. Anthrax is not spread from one person to another person.**
- 2. For anthrax to be effective as a covert agent, it must be aerosolized into very small particles. This is difficult to do, and requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. If these small particles are inhaled, life-threatening lung infection can occur, but prompt recognition and treatment is effective.**



What are the Characteristics of a Suspicious Package?

The likelihood of receiving a package or letter containing suspicious substances is remote. However, it is important for everyone to be aware of characteristics that are common to suspicious packages. Some indicators include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Oily stains, discolorations or odors
- No return address
- Excessive weight, lopsided or uneven envelope
- Ticking sound
- A city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address.

