

Taking Antibiotics: What to Do to Improve Compliance

Just telling people that they need to do something doesn't mean it will happen. This is also true for prescribed medicine – a doctor's prescription doesn't guarantee that a patient will take the prescribed medicine, even if there are known possible health risks if the drugs are not taken. To help ensure people continue to take the medications prescribed to prevent inhalation anthrax, a network of support should be established. The support network would help to

- Ensure mail workers receive sufficient antibiotics
- Provide encouragement to complete the 60-days of preventive therapy

A supportive environment would include

- Easy access to preventive antibiotics
- Information sharing regarding
 - Anthrax disease
 - Side effects
 - Resources to aid mail worker exposed to anthrax
 - Information on the ongoing investigation
- Encouragement to seek help if they feel sick
- Reminders that no one either with anthrax or on antibiotics for anthrax is contagious

There are many ways to maintain regular communication with these persons. For example, through

- Blast fax or mass distribution of e-mail messages
- Posting messages in public places
- Setting up a place workers can congregate easily to watch a videotape of CDC information sessions
- Building a support group from all levels of the workforce.

It is important to keep in mind the following guidelines to improve the success of your messages:

- Keep messages short and to the point
- Use appropriate reading level in materials
- Use graphics to capture audience attention
- Avoid technical or medical jargon