

Quick Facts about Anthrax

- *Bacillus anthracis*, the cause of anthrax is found in the soil in most parts of the world, including the United States. It can cause disease in animals or humans if enough anthrax spores from the environment are eaten, inhaled, or get in a break in the skin.
- When large amounts of anthrax spores are inhaled in the lungs, it may cause a serious illness and result in death if treatment is not received early. Symptoms vary, and early symptoms include fever, feeling tired, and cough. However, a person with anthrax will get extremely sick within a few days. Symptoms usually show up within 7 days of breathing in the spores. Skin anthrax infection usually occurs within 1 week of exposure. It is an obvious open sore with a dark center. Early treatment with antibiotics is needed to ensure it is cured.
- Anthrax is not contagious. Family, friends, and coworkers cannot get inhalational anthrax disease from you. However, direct contact with a skin lesion can transmit anthrax.
- Antibiotics are available to prevent anthrax disease if given early after a person inhales the spores.