

# ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

Residents should take protective actions because of anthrax release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health has been advised that an incident involving \_\_\_\_\_ has led to the release of anthrax. Residents of \_\_\_\_\_ (list affected areas) are encouraged to take protective action to prevent exposure and seek medical attention if they have been exposed.

Anthrax is a serious disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, a bacterium that forms spores. A bacterium is a very small organism made up of one cell. Many bacteria can cause a disease. A spore is a cell that is dormant (asleep) but may come to life with the right conditions.

The anthrax spores can be manipulated so that they can:

- float through the air and disperse as widely as possible,
- be released into heating and ventilation systems, or
- be distributed through envelopes in the mail

Anthrax is not known to spread from person to person.

“We want people who are in the affected areas to take this threat seriously and take precautions to limit exposure to themselves and others,” said \_\_\_\_\_ (Public Health spokesperson). “We also want those who have been exposed to take measures to prevent serious harm and to seek medical attention immediately if they have any symptoms.”

Persons who are in the above affected areas and believe that they may have come into contact with the agent should seek medical attention. The symptoms of anthrax vary depending on the type of anthrax disease.

- Cutaneous: The first symptom is a small sore that develops into a blister. The blister then develops into a skin ulcer with a black area in the center. The sore, blister and ulcer do not hurt. Symptoms appear within 1-7 days after exposure.
- Gastrointestinal: The first symptoms are nausea, loss of appetite, bloody diarrhea, and fever, followed by bad stomach pain. Symptoms may appear within 2-5 days of exposure.
- Inhalation: The first symptoms of inhalation anthrax are like cold or flu symptoms and can include a sore throat, mild fever and muscle aches. Later symptoms include cough, chest discomfort, shortness of breath, tiredness and muscle aches. Symptoms can occur within seven days of infection and can take up to 42 days to appear.

All three types of anthrax can be treated with a 60-day course of antibiotics.

Doxycycline is the preferred antibiotic for anthrax infection. Treatment should begin as soon as possible after exposure.

The department has scheduled a point of dispensing site at \_\_\_\_\_ (location – city) from \_\_\_\_\_ (time) to dispense \_\_\_\_\_ (medication). The \_\_\_\_\_ (medication) will be designated for the following priority groups:

- Priority group
- Priority group
- Priority group

Stay tuned to your local radio or television stations for more information, developments or changes in the situation. For more information on biological agents, please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).