



MACOMB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ANTHRAX

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What is anthrax?

- Anthrax is a bacterium that forms spores. People who come into contact with anthrax spores may become ill. The spores can infect your skin, lungs, or digestive system.
- Anthrax powder may be intentionally sent through the mail or released through the air.
- Some forms of anthrax also exist in nature. People are rarely infected with anthrax in nature in Michigan.
- Early diagnosis and treatment is important.

Can anthrax be spread from person to person?

Anthrax infection is not spread from person-to-person.

How soon will symptoms develop (incubation period)?

Symptoms may start 1-6 days after exposure.

What are the symptoms of anthrax infection?

- If anthrax is breathed, you may have a fever, non-productive cough and severe shortness of breath.
- If the skin is infected, an itchy black spot with swelling may appear.
- If anthrax is eaten, you may develop a stomachache, vomiting and bloody diarrhea.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

What if you think you have been exposed or have symptoms of anthrax infection?

Call your doctor or an Infectious Disease Specialist. If you do not have a doctor, call your local hospital for a medical referral.

How is the infection treated?

Anthrax infection is treated with an antibiotic.

How long should I take the antibiotic?

Take the antibiotic for as long as it is prescribed, which may be up to 60 days.

How is the infection prevented?

- If the Macomb County Health Department determines that you were exposed to anthrax, you will be offered an antibiotic.
- Even if you take the antibiotic, you may develop the infection.
- If you develop symptoms such as fever or shortness of breath while you are taking the antibiotic, you should go to the nearest hospital emergency room immediately.

What should I do if I DO NOT have symptoms?

- If you do not have symptoms of the infection, continue with your routine daily activities.
- DO NOT go to a hospital emergency room unless you have a fever or develop shortness of breath.

How can you protect yourself?

- Do not open any strange package, envelope or other container that you suspect may contain anthrax. Leave the area and stop others from entering the area. Call 911 or the local police for more instructions.
- Stay informed. Listen for announcements and instructions from public health officials.

How can I get health advisories or alerts?

- In the event of a public health threat or emergency, the Macomb County Health Department will make frequent public announcements.
- List to local radio and TV for more information. You may also visit <http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth> or call 586-466-7923 for instructions.

MORE ANTHRAX INFORMATION

Anthrax : Michigan Prepares (MDCH/OPHP)
http://www.michigan.gov/michiganprepares/0,1607,7-232-42666_42882_42953-150497-,00.html

Anthrax (CDC)
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/>

Anthrax Fact Sheet (NIAID)
<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/anthrax.htm>

Suspicious Mail Alert (U.S. Postal Service)
http://www.usps.com/news/_pdf/poster.pdf

Call the CDC at **1-800-CDC-INFO** or
1-888-232-6348 (TTY).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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<http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth>