



## Outbreak of Anthrax around the World

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### DESCRIPTION

Anthrax is a rare but serious disease caused by anthrax, a spore-forming bacterium. Anthrax mainly affects livestock and hunting. Humans can be infected by direct or indirect contact with sick animals.

There is no evidence that anthracis is transmitted from person to person, but Anthracis can be transmitted by direct contact or contact with contaminated objects (genital organs). Anthrax usually enters the body through a wound on the skin. It can also be transmitted by eating contaminated meat or inhaling spores.

Anthrax can be found all over the world. It is most common in agricultural areas found in animals. It is more common in developing countries or countries without a veterinary health program. Anthrax is reported more frequently in some parts of the world (South and Central America, South and East Europe, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Middle East) than in others. It has been extremely rare in the United States for the past few decades and was limited to skin morphology until the 2001 cases in Florida and New York City. Skin infections account for more than 95% of cases. Without treatment, the risk of death from anthrax is 23.7%. Intestinal infections have a 25-75% risk of death, while inhaled anthrax has a 50%-80% mortality rate even with treatment. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, anthrax infections killed hundreds of thousands of people and animals each year. Anthrax has been developed as a weapon in many countries. In herbivores, eating and inhaling spores during grazing causes infection. Animals can become infected by killing or eating infected animals.

When anthrax affects humans, it is usually due to occupational exposure to infected animals or their products. However, anthracis is considered one of several potential agents for use in biological terrorism.

Signs and symptoms that vary depending on how the infection is transmitted include skin pain, vomiting, and shock. Rapid treatment with antibiotics can cure most anthrax infections. Inhaled anthrax is more difficult to treat and can be fatal.

Grazing livestock on contaminated pastures is susceptible to anthrax. Outbreaks of pigs, dogs, cats and captive wildlife generally result from the consumption of contaminated food. In the acute form, there is an increase in body temperature, followed by cramps, respiratory or heart problems, tremors, staggers, and cramps. Blood drainage can come from the natural openings of the body, and edematous swelling can occur in different parts of the body. Death usually occurs within a day or two days. Chronic anthrax occurs primarily in pigs and dogs and is characterized by marked swelling of the throat, dyspnea, and bloody, foamy discharge from the mouth. Affected animals sometimes choke. Vaccination is widely used to prevent anthrax in livestock. At the time of outbreak, strict quarantine measures, disposal of diseased carcasses by burning, control of flies, and good hygiene are essential to control the disease.

Anthracis is diagnosed when laboratory culture finds the bacterial anthrax in blood, skin lesions, or respiratory secretions. It can also be diagnosed by measuring specific antibodies in the blood of an infected person. Nasal swabs are not a good way to diagnose anthrax because it is not possible to clearly determine if you have been exposed to anthrax.

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