

# Anthrax Vaccination

Anthrax is a serious disease that is spread by a bacteria. Infection occurs by handling or consuming products from infected animals, though it can be weaponized, as happened in 2001.

## Is there a vaccination for anthrax?

A protective vaccine has been developed for anthrax, but it is mostly given to military personnel. Vaccination is recommended only for those at high risk, such as workers in research laboratories that handle anthrax bacteria routinely.

Using a combination of 60 days of antibiotics plus 3 doses of vaccine after being exposed is very effective in preventing anthrax disease from occurring.

## Is the anthrax vaccine available to the public?

A vaccine has been developed for anthrax that is protective against infection. Questions regarding the availability of the vaccine should be directed to the manufacturer, Emergent BioSolutions, in Rockville, MD. Currently the vaccine is recommended prior to an event or exposure only for populations at high risk of exposure to aerosolized (airborne) spores. CDC and its academic partners are continuing to support the development of the next generation of anthrax vaccines.

## Who should be vaccinated against anthrax?

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended anthrax vaccination for peo-



ple who work directly with anthrax in the laboratory, work with imported animal hides or furs in areas where standards for protection against anthrax is low, and those who handle potentially infected animal products in high-incidence areas. While occurrences are low in the United States, veterinarians who travel to work in other countries where incidence is higher should consider being vaccinated. Military personnel deployed to areas with high risk for exposure to the organism.

However, these recommendations are currently under review and may change. Please refer to the Anthrax Vaccine Home Page [<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/anthrax/default.htm>] for the most current recommendations.

## What is the protocol for anthrax vaccination?

The primary immunization series consists of five intramuscular injections given at day 0, week 4, months 6, 12, and 18. Following the priming series, annual booster injections of the

vaccine are recommended.

## Are there adverse reactions to the anthrax vaccine?

Mild local reactions occur in 30% of recipients and consist of slight tenderness and redness at the injection site. Severe local reactions are infrequent and consist of extensive swelling

of the forearm in addition to the local reaction. Full-body reactions occur in fewer than 0.2% of recipients.

Learn more at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/needtoknow.asp>  
Source: CDC

## HIGHLIGHTS

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The Miami-Dade County Health Department's Public Health Preparedness Program is devoted to keeping the community ready for a variety of public health emergencies, including bioterrorism attacks such as anthrax release.

For more information, call the main number at (305) 470-6928 or email at [MDCHD\\_PHP@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:MDCHD_PHP@doh.state.fl.us)

For more health topics, visit [www.dadehealth.org/atoz/atoz.asp](http://www.dadehealth.org/atoz/atoz.asp)