



# INHALATION ANTHRAX RESPONSE GUIDE



Inhalation anthrax is a disease caused by breathing in anthrax spores. Early symptoms may include fever, chills, sweats, fatigue, headache, cough, nausea, vomiting or muscle aches. As the illness progresses, symptoms become more severe and commonly include shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chest discomfort, confusion or dizziness. **You cannot catch inhalation anthrax from another person.**

The anthrax bacteria (called *Bacillus anthracis*) is found in nature, but it can also be grown in a lab and could be released into the air on purpose. Since the 1990s, the New York City Health Department has been working with other City, State and federal agencies to plan and prepare for this unlikely possibility.



## Protect yourself and your family.

- ▶ If there is an emergency involving anthrax, City officials will work with federal and state partners to find out who may have been exposed.
- ▶ If necessary, the Health Department will open Points of Dispensing (PODs) in the city to give free antibiotics. **The Health Department will provide instructions about when, where and how to pick up antibiotics that prevent illness.**
- ▶ PODs do not provide medical services or treatment for people who are already sick. If you think you may have been exposed and experience any of the symptoms listed above, get medical care right away.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- ▶ Get health information from credible sources ([nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov), [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and 311).
- ▶ Sign up for Notify NYC for information about emergency events.
- ▶ If you or anyone you know feels overwhelmed or needs help coping, visit [lifenet.nyc](http://lifenet.nyc) for free help in your language.
- ▶ In an emergency, always call 911.

***If the City opens Points of Dispensing (PODs):***



## Complete and print the Antibiotic Screening Form.

- ▶ Access the Antibiotic Screening Form from a computer. It will be on <http://www.nyc.gov/health> and other internet sources.
- ▶ Complete and print the Antibiotic Screening Form for yourself and others.

- Help neighbors, friends and family who may not have access to a computer or printer.
- One Antibiotic Screening Form must be completed and printed for each person getting antibiotics, including each child.
- If you cannot complete the Antibiotic Screening Form on the computer, forms will be available for you to complete at a POD.



## Find a Point of Dispensing (POD) in your area.

- Check <http://www.nyc.gov/health>, local television, radio and social media or call 311 to find a POD near you. If you do not live in New York City, check with your local public health agency.



## Pick up antibiotics or ask someone to pick them up for you.

You can pick up antibiotics for yourself and up to five additional people, including family members, coworkers or others not in your household.

- If you cannot go to a POD, ask someone to pick up antibiotics for you.
- If possible, help others by picking up their antibiotics.
- If you do not have a completed Antibiotic Screening Form, bring a pen or pencil to fill out forms at the POD.
- Bring a bag to carry the antibiotics home.
- Dress appropriately for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. Lines at the POD may be long and outdoors.
- PODs are wheelchair-accessible. POD staff will make every effort to accommodate those with special needs.
- **You will NOT be asked for identification at a POD.**



## Take antibiotics as directed.

- You will get information about how to take the antibiotics at the POD, including instructions on how to prepare the antibiotics for children or for adults who cannot swallow pills.
- You can also get information about the antibiotics on <http://www.nyc.gov/health> or by calling your doctor, your pharmacist or 311.
- Take the antibiotics you receive until they are gone, unless otherwise directed by health officials.



## Stay informed.

- Use radios, televisions, computers or mobile devices for information from officials about how to stay safe.