

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

Anthrax: Information for Public Health Officials

Spore-forming bacteria

Unique Epidemiological Characteristics

- ▶ No natural reservoir in West Virginia
- ▶ A newly reported case should be urgently investigated considering:
 - ▶ travel
 - ▶ highly unusual exposure to animal or animal products
 - ▶ BT.
- ▶ Incubation: 1-60 days; with most cases occurring within the first week
- ▶ No person-to-person transmission
- ▶ Mortality: 60 - 100% for inhalational anthrax and 20% for cutaneous anthrax without therapy – *Dire emergency*
- ▶ Environmental: hardy for decades in the spore form
- ▶ Treatment (Ciprofloxacin, doxycycline) effective in reducing mortality if begun early
- ▶ Prophylaxis (Ciprofloxacin, doxycycline) effective in preventing disease

Laboratory confirmation

- ▶ Screening tests should be completed by hospital laboratory; confirmation by OLS

Employee health considerations

- ▶ Personal protective equipment / training required for persons doing environmental investigations
- ▶ Prophylaxis required for employees who have been exposed.
- ▶ Standard precautions for work with infected individuals

Life-saving interventions - in order

- ▶ Recognition / reporting / casefinding + early and appropriate therapy
- ▶ Risk factor and environmental investigation to establish source of exposure / population at risk AND rapid initiation of prophylaxis
- ▶ Antibiotic sensitivity testing of the isolate

Training considerations

- ▶ Physicians: recognition / treatment / reporting
- ▶ ICPs: reporting, active surveillance procedures
- ▶ Labs: screening tests and procedure for referral to OLS
- ▶ Local health departments, regional epidemiologists: NPS issues > investigation
- ▶ IDEP / DSDC / BPH: employee health / investigation / priorities for control.
- ▶ Environmental Health: personal protective equipment, environmental sampling