



Bioterrorism involves the intentional use of germs (e.g., bacteria, viruses) or other biological substances (e.g., toxins) to cause illness, death, fear, social disruption and economic damage. Here are some steps you can take to prepare and protect yourself and your family for bioterrorism threats.

## Before a Bioterrorism Situation

- **Make a family emergency supply kit.**
  - Depending on the situation, you could be asked to “shelter-in-place” or to evacuate a specific area. Have essential supplies on hand for your family.
  - Canned food: 3-5 days worth – don’t forget a non-electric can opener
  - Water to last 3-5 days -- about 1 gallon of water per person per day
  - Any medications needed by family members (e.g., heart or high blood pressure medication, insulin, contact lens supplies)
  - A first aid kit and first aid manual
  - Personal hygiene supplies (e.g., soap, toothpaste, toilet paper, garbage bags, etc.)
  - Hand sanitizer
- **Don’t forget items for pets.**
  - See the ‘Pet Emergency Supply Kit’ handout.
- **Make a family communication plan.**
  - Know how you will contact each other if you are at work, school or other separate locations.
  - Have an out-of-state friend or relative serve as an emergency contact for everyone to call.
  - Keep a list of emergency phone numbers.
    - Healthcare provider
    - Local public health department
    - Local hospital
  - Give emergency numbers to all family members and post by every phone.
- **Install a HEPA filter in your furnace return duct.**
  - High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters can remove particles in the 0.3 to 10 micron range; this may help filter out most biological agents that may enter your house. HEPA filters will not filter chemical agents.
  - If you do not have a central heating or cooling system, a stand-alone portable HEPA filter can be used.
- **Animals can be affected by many bioterrorism agents and may show signs of illness before humans.**
  - Monitor your pets for signs of illness.
  - Keep ill pets away from healthy animals and people.
  - Contact your veterinarian.

## During a Bioterrorism Situation

- **Do not panic!**
  - Remain calm and be patient.
- **Gather your emergency supplies.**
- **Stay informed.**
  - Listen to the radio or television for official news and information.
  - This will include the signs and symptoms of the disease, areas in danger, if medications or vaccinations are being distributed, and where you should seek medical attention if you become ill.
  - Information will surface from various sources, not all may be reliable.
- **Be prepared for possible disruption of services.**
  - There may be a large number of casualties.
  - Workplaces, businesses and schools may close in efforts to keep the disease from spreading.
  - You and your family may have to evacuate.
  - Public services (e.g., law enforcement, emergency, healthcare) may be strained.
- **If you become aware of an unusual and suspicious substance nearby:**
  - Cover your mouth and nose with layers of fabric (e.g., t-shirt, handkerchief, towel) to filter the air but still allow breathing.
  - Move away quickly.
  - Wash with soap and water.
  - Contact the proper authorities.
  - Contact a healthcare provider if you become ill.
- **If you are exposed to a biological agent:**
  - Remove and bag your clothes and personal items.
  - Wash with soap and water; put on clean clothes.
  - Follow official instructions for proper disposal of contaminated items.
  - Contact your healthcare provider. You may be advised to stay away from others or even be quarantined.
  - To avoid the further spread, stay in your home unless advised otherwise by the proper authorities.
  - Listen to official warnings and instructions. The delivery of medical services for a biological event may be handled differently due to increased demand.
- **If you are instructed to stay inside and not evacuate:**
  - Close and lock all windows and doors.
  - Turn off all fans, and heat or air conditioning.
  - Seal gaps under doorways and windows with duct tape.

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# POTENTIAL BIOTERRORISM AGENTS

Man-Made and Technological Threats

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified several agents that are considered potential bioterrorism threats. These are divided into categories based on several criteria. The category descriptions and corresponding agents are listed below.

Category	Description	Biological Agent
<p><b>Category A</b> High priority organisms or toxins that pose the highest risk to the public and national security.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They can be easily spread or transmitted from person-to-person.</li> <li>• They result in high death rates and have the potential for major public health impact.</li> <li>• They might cause public panic and social disruption.</li> <li>• They require special action for public health preparedness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthrax</li> <li>• Botulism</li> <li>• Plague</li> <li>• Tularemia</li> <li>• Viral hemorrhagic fever viruses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Category B</b> These agents are second highest priority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are moderately easy to spread.</li> <li>• They result in moderate illness rates and low death rates.</li> <li>• They require enhanced laboratory techniques and disease monitoring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brucellosis</li> <li>• Glanders</li> <li>• Melioidosis</li> <li>• Psittacosis</li> <li>• Q Fever</li> <li>• Typhus fever</li> <li>• Viral encephalitis viruses</li> <li>• Ricin and other toxins</li> </ul>
<p><b>Category C</b> These third highest priority agents include emerging pathogens that can be engineered for mass spread in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are easily available.</li> <li>• They are easily produced and spread.</li> <li>• They have potential for high illness and death rates and major health impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nipah virus</li> <li>• Hantavirus</li> </ul>

For more information about these agents, go to: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/bioterrorism/>