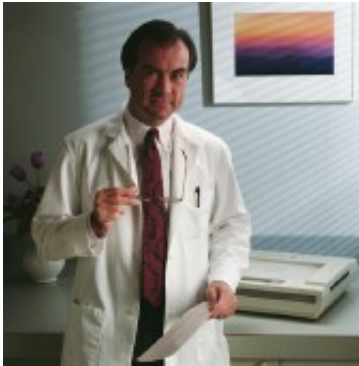


Pediatricians should plan for anthrax attack, US experts say

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Children may need special treatment in wake of bioterrorism.

(HealthDay)—Children may require different treatment than adults after exposure to anthrax, says a new report from leading U.S. pediatricians and health officials.

Because of the danger posed by anthrax—a potential bioterrorism weapon—pediatricians need to be knowledgeable and prepared in order to minimize illness and death in the event of an anthrax release, says the report from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Anthrax, an infectious disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis* bacteria, can cause thousands of infections with a high death rate if not quickly recognized and treated.

It's important that diagnosis and management of children with potential [anthrax infection](#) is handled by their pediatricians and others who normally provide them with health care, said the report, published online April 28 in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Public [health officials](#) will provide antibiotics for infants and children exposed to airborne [anthrax spores](#) during a bioterror attack. If started within 72 hours of exposure, antibiotics can prevent disease, the authors explained.

Anthrax can enter the body through cuts and other openings in the skin, by breathing it in, or through the gastrointestinal tract. The health experts said all forms of entry can lead to systemic infection, which is generally not contagious. In these cases, standard precautions should be taken in routine patient care, they advised.

Along with treating patients, pediatricians have an important role in helping families understand and comply with treatments, the authors added.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [anthrax](#).

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