



HEALTH ALERT TO EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND HOSPITAL HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Tenth Anniversary of 9/11: Continue to remain vigilant

The tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks follows the death earlier this year of Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. The confluence of these events leads to heightened concern for acts of terrorism. In an effort to detect potential acts of terrorism in the period leading up to and following the 9/11 anniversary, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is reminding Emergency Rooms and Hospital Healthcare Providers to continue to remain vigilant for potential cases of bioterrorism, chemical terrorism, and nuclear/radiological terrorism. Healthcare Providers are also reminded to report any suspected cases immediately to public health as concerns regarding infection control, management of those exposed, diagnostic testing, and specimen collection/packaging need to be addressed.

Clues to potential terrorist incidents include:

- A single case of disease caused by uncommon agent (e.g. anthrax, smallpox)
- An unusual clinical presentation of a single patient (e.g. severe gastrointestinal or respiratory syndrome with rapid progression of illness without an explained cause should heighten suspicion)
- A higher morbidity and mortality with a common disease or syndrome (e.g. gastrointestinal or respiratory) or failure of such patient to respond to usual therapy
- Ill persons who seek treatment at the same time (point source)
- Simultaneous clusters of similar illnesses
- A simultaneous illness with pets, equine, livestock, or other animals
- Large numbers of ill persons with similar disease or syndrome
- Large numbers of unexplained diseases or deaths

Potential bioterrorism diseases/agents include:

Anthrax (*Bacillus anthracis*)

Ricin poisoning (*Ricinus communis*)

Botulism (*Clostridium botulinum*)

Food safety threats (e.g. *E. coli*, *Salmonella*)

Plague (*Yersinia pestis*)

Smallpox (*Variola major*)

Tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*)

Viral hemorrhagic fever viruses (e.g. Ebola, Lassa fever)

Glanders/Melioidosis (*Burkholderia pseudomallei*, *Burkholderia mallei*)

Chemical terrorism agents include:

Nerve agents

Blister agents (e.g. sulfur mustard)

Cyanide

Pulmonary Intoxicants (e.g. phosgene, chlorine)

Nuclear/Radiological terrorism:

Acute radiation syndrome

Cutaneous radiation injuries

In the event of a suspected terrorism incident or suspected case, healthcare providers should call the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Acute Communicable Disease Control Program immediately and ask to speak with the Public Health Physician on Call. **During Business Hours (M-F, 8am - 5pm): (213) 240-7941. After Hours: (213) 974-1234**

Specific information regarding presentation, diagnosis, management, and treatment guidelines for healthcare providers on each of the above bioterrorism, chemical terrorism, and nuclear/radiological terrorism agents is available at:

<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Bioterrorism/Terrorismagentinformation.pdf>