What about long-term side effects?

This vaccine has been used for over 40 years. Multi-year studies by independent civilian groups have found no patterns of long-term health problems due to anthrax vaccination. A vaccine, like any prescription medicine, can cause significant problems but the risk of the anthrax vaccine causing serious harm or death is very small.

What if I have a health problem or adverse event after receiving a vaccination?

For severe allergic reactions, seek immediate medical care. For all other reactions, seek care at your earliest convenience for follow-up with a medical provider.

Tell the doctor what happened, the date and time it occurred, and when the vaccination was given. Any provider or person who would like additional medical advice or consultation may contact the 24-hour DHA Immunization Healthcare Support Center at 877.GETVACC (877.438.8222) and press Option 1 for immediate clinical consultation. All providers must report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form as noted below.

All National Guard and Reserve personnel may seek care from a civilian hospital or clinic, when unable to reach a military hospital, for treatment of an adverse event after a military-directed vaccination. Evaluation or treatment will not be denied or delayed, pending a line-of-duty (LOD) determination. However, when seeking care from a civilian provider, remember to notify your commander for the proper LOD paperwork or Notice of Eligibility determination. All Military directed vaccinations are within the LOD; therefore, you should not encounter any issues.

For assistance concerning issues with civilian health services outside a military Medical Treatment Facility call: 888.647.6676 (DSN 792.3950)

When should a VAERS report be filed?

A VAERS should be reported when a significant health problem or adverse event occurs after vaccination. An adverse event that requires medical treatment or interferes with work or recreation should be reported. Anyone may submit a report to the VAERS system. DoD requires VAERS reporting for an adverse event that results in hospitalization or loss of work/duty for 24 hours or more. A report should also be filed if contamination of a vaccine vial is suspected. Healthcare providers are encouraged to report adverse events that the provider considers unexpected in nature. Forms are available at www.vaers.hhs.gov or 800.822.7967.
What is Anthrax?
Anthrax is a serious disease caused by a bacterium called Bacillus anthracis. The small, one-celled organism survives as a spore and may remain inactive for many years until it infects a human or animal. Anthrax is naturally found in soil around the world. Hoofed animals (e.g., cattle, sheep, goats, camels, antelopes) ingest the soil as they graze and are thereby infected with the spores (or disease). Humans can be infected when exposed to anthrax infected animal tissue, such as bones or hides, or when spores are used as a bioterrorist weapon.

Anthrax cannot be spread from one person to another. Humans must come in contact with the actual spore to be infected. The bacteria can enter the body in four different ways:

1. Inhalation. This exposure happens when the spores are inhaled into the lungs. It is the deadliest form of anthrax. Symptoms include sore throat, fever, muscle aches that worsen over several days, to breathing problems, shock, meningitis, and death.

2. Cutaneous. The most common exposure is through a small break in the skin. It can cause skin ulcers, fever, and fatigue.

3. Gastrointestinal. This exposure occurs by eating raw or undercooked infected meat. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, sore throat, abdominal pain and swelling. It may also lead to blood poisoning, shock, and death.

4. Injection. This was recently identified as another means of exposure to anthrax. It has been identified in heroin-injecting drug users in northern Europe. This type of infection has not yet been reported in the U.S. Symptoms may be similar to those of cutaneous anthrax, but there may be infection deep under the skin or in the muscle where the drug was injected. Injection anthrax can spread throughout the body faster and can be harder to recognize and treat.

Who is the Department of Defense vaccinating personnel?
Anthrax can be and has been used as a biological weapon. Weaponized anthrax spores are known to be odorless, colorless, tasteless, and very difficult to detect. Currently the only measure available to protect personnel is pre-exposure vaccinations. Inhalation anthrax, the expected route of weaponized exposure, requires hospitalization and aggressive personnel is pre-exposure vaccinations.

Anthrax can be and has been used as a biological weapon. Weaponized anthrax spores are known to be odorless, colorless, tasteless, and very difficult to detect. Currently the only measure available to protect personnel is pre-exposure vaccinations. Inhalation anthrax, the expected route of weaponized exposure, requires hospitalization and aggressive personnel is pre-exposure vaccinations.

Who is required to receive the vaccine?
Anthrax vaccination is mandatory for uniformed personnel, emergency essential personnel and contractors traveling or assigned (or deploying within 120 days) to the U.S. CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR) and the Korean Peninsula for 15 or more consecutive days. Anthrax vaccination is also mandatory for all special units with previously approved exceptions to policy (ETP).

Who should NOT receive the vaccine?
Temporary exemptions should be provided for individuals with moderate or severe allergies. The anthrax vaccination should be delayed just continue vaccinations as scheduled.

Who should NOT receive the vaccine?
Anyone who:
- Has a previous allergic reaction to a prior dose of anthrax vaccine
- Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
- Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history
- Has a latex allergy

Who should NOT receive the vaccine?
 Anyone who:
  - Has a previous allergic reaction to a prior dose of anthrax vaccine
  - Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
  - Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history
  - Has a latex allergy

What is the anthrax vaccine?
BioThrax (Anthrax) vaccine was licensed in 1970 and is approved for use in individuals 18 to 65 years of age. The vaccine does not contain live anthrax cells and it cannot cause an anthrax infection.

The vaccine is injected into the deltoid at day 0, 4 weeks, and 6 months, with booster doses at 6 and 12 months after completion of the primary series, and then additional boosters given annually. Each dose builds on the immune response from earlier doses: like climbing steps on a ladder towards full protection. The complete series, with boosters, is needed for maximum protection. Vaccinations should not be administered earlier than the recommended due date. The series should not be restarted; if a dose was delayed just continue vaccinations as scheduled.

Schedule Route Dosing Schedule
Primary Series Intramuscular 0, 1, and 6 months
Booster Series Intramuscular 6 and 12 months after completion of the primary series and at 12 month intervals thereafter

Annual boosters are recommended to sustain ongoing protection.

What side effects may occur after vaccination?
The anthrax vaccine may cause local reactions such as tenderness, itching, redness, bruising or a small lump or bump at the injection site. These reactions usually resolve on their own after a few days.

Other side effects may include muscle or joint aches, headaches, fatigue, and fever. These symptoms are less common and usually go away in less than a week. If any symptoms persist please contact your primary care provider.

With any vaccination, serious reactions may occur. Signs of a serious allergic reaction include difficulty breathing, weakness, unconsciousness, hoarseness or wheezing, a fast heartbeat, hives, dizziness, paleness, or swelling of the throat. Seek immediate medical care for any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction.

1. The CDC no longer lists GBS as either a precaution or contraindication to receipt of the anthrax vaccine.

Use caution in individuals with latex sensitivity.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.

• Had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of anthrax vaccine
• Had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine component
• Is immunosuppressed due to a disease or medication history

Use latex gloves and avoid contact with any latex products.