

NOTIFIABLE MEDICAL CONDITIONS (NMC) CASE DEFINITIONS FLIPCHART

Category 1: Immediate reporting telephonically followed by written or electronic notification within 24hrs of diagnosing a case

ANTHRAX

| Why is surveillance necessary? | Who must notify and when? | Suspected case definition | Probable case definition | Confirmed case definition |
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| <p>Anthrax is a serious infection usually transmitted from animals, or following ingestion of or wound contamination with anthrax spores. The condition is preventable through antibiotic prophylaxis and eradication of the source. The condition is fatal unless treated intensively and early by means of antibiotics. Anthrax is found throughout South Africa but more frequently in the Northern Cape and northern Kruger National Park (Limpopo). The condition is notifiable because prompt action can prevent additional cases. The organism also has potential for use as a bioweapon.</p> | <p>The clinician who suspects a case should notify the case based on the clinical case definition, as soon as the disease is suspected.</p> | <p>A person with an appropriate epidemiological exposure (e.g. occupational contact with ruminants that have died recently, or animal products such as skins, or contact with anthrax spore-contaminated soil, or ingestion of undercooked, contaminated or raw meat), or history of injection drug abuse, and any of the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mild or extensive skin lesion evolving over 1-6 days from a papular/vesicular appearance to a depressed black eschar, usually accompanied by oedema, fever, malaise and lymphadenopathy <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nausea, vomiting and anorexia followed by fever, vomiting of blood, bloody diarrhoea <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid onset of hypoxia, shortness of breath and high temperature, with radiological evidence of mediastinal widening or pleural effusion <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute onset of high fever, convulsions, loss of consciousness and meningeal signs and symptoms | <p>A suspected case with Gram-positive bacilli, square-ended, in pairs or short chains cultured from clinical specimens</p> | <p>A clinically compatible case that is laboratory-confirmed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation of <i>Bacillus anthracis</i> from clinical specimen; OR • Other laboratory evidence of <i>Bacillus anthracis</i> infection based on at least two supportive laboratory tests. |
| <p>Additional notes Clinicians who suspect anthrax should contact the NICD 24-hour hotline (082-883-9920) for assistance with specimen collection and diagnosis. When a case of anthrax is suspected, a case investigation form should be completed. When bioterrorism is suspected, the South African Police Service should be notified.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Additional resources A Frequently Asked questions document on anthrax is available at https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/anthrax/ The Healthcare workers handbook on bioterrorism (2011) is available at https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/anthrax/</p> | | | | |