

GASTROINTESTINAL DISASTER RESPONSE

Background:

People become infected with gastrointestinal anthrax when they eat anthrax- contaminated food or swallow anthrax spores. The anthrax infects the intestines, causing swelling and irritation. The anthrax bacteria can also spread to the bloodstream. Of all the types of anthrax, gastrointestinal is the hardest to diagnose. It can be fatal if left untreated. About 25 to 60 percent of cases are fatal. Gastrointestinal anthrax is rare—but there have been outbreaks in Africa and Asia. Most cases were caused by eating undercooked, contaminated meat. No cases have been reported in the United States.

Initial Symptoms:	Later Symptoms:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symptoms usually appear within seven days of exposure• Loss of appetite• Fever• Check for the following symptoms: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and dehydration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abdominal pain• Vomiting (including blood)• Severe diarrhea• Sores in the mouth or throat
Treatment:	
Gastrointestinal anthrax is treated with antibiotics. Antibiotics can help, but should only be taken if a health care professional tells you to do so. Most people will receive Doxycycline (“Doxy”). Doxy has been proven to cause fewer side effects than other antibiotics. If people infected are pregnant, nursing, or allergic to Doxycycline, they will receive Ciprofloxacin (“Cipro”). Cipro may cause more side effects than Doxy, but is still safe. Both medications have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).	
If you have Eaten Anthrax-Contaminated Food:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Visit your health care professional to be tested and treated.<input type="checkbox"/> Antibiotics can help, but should only be taken if a health care professional tells you to do so.<input type="checkbox"/> Drink plenty of water—it is important to replace lost fluids and electrolytes.	

