



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving lives, protecting people, reducing health costs

Emergency Preparedness and Response

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Bioterrorism Agents/Diseases

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Category A

Definition

The U.S. public health system and primary healthcare providers must be prepared to address various biological agents, including pathogens that are rarely seen in the United States. High-priority agents include organisms that pose a risk to national security because they

- can be easily disseminated or transmitted from person to person;
- result in high mortality rates and have the potential for major public health impact;
- might cause public panic and social disruption; and
- require special action for public health preparedness.

Agents/Diseases

- [Anthrax \(/agent/anthrax/\)](#) (*Bacillus anthracis*)
- [Botulism \(/agent/botulism/\)](#) (*Clostridium botulinum* toxin)
- [Plague \(/agent/plague/\)](#) (*Yersinia pestis*)
- [Smallpox \(/agent/smallpox/\)](#) (variola major)
- [Tularemia \(/agent/tularemia/\)](#) (*Francisella tularensis*)
- [Viral hemorrhagic fevers \(/agent/vhf/\)](#) (filoviruses [e.g., Ebola, Marburg] and arenaviruses [e.g., Lassa, Machupo])

Category B

Definition

Second highest priority agents include those that

- are moderately easy to disseminate;
- result in moderate morbidity rates and low mortality rates; and
- require specific enhancements of CDC's diagnostic capacity and enhanced disease surveillance.

Agents/Diseases

- [Brucellosis \(/agent/brucellosis/\)](#) (*Brucella* species)
- Epsilon toxin of *Clostridium perfringens*
- Food safety threats (food/) (e.g., *Salmonella* species, *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, *Shigella*)
- [Glanders \(http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/glanders_g.htm\)](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/glanders_g.htm) (*Burkholderia mallei*)
- [Melioidosis \(http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/melioidosis_g.htm\)](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/melioidosis_g.htm) (*Burkholderia pseudomallei*)
- Psittacosis (*Chlamydia psittaci*)
- [Q fever \(/agent/qfever/\)](#) (*Coxiella burnetii*)
- [Ricin toxin \(/agent/ricin/\)](#) from *Ricinus communis* (castor beans)

- Staphylococcal enterotoxin B
- Typhus fever (*Rickettsia prowazekii*)
- Viral encephalitis (alphaviruses [e.g., Venezuelan equine encephalitis, eastern equine encephalitis, western equine encephalitis])
- Water safety threats (e.g., *Vibrio cholerae*, *Cryptosporidium parvum*)

Category C

Definition

Third highest priority agents include emerging pathogens that could be engineered for mass dissemination in the future because of

- availability;
- ease of production and dissemination; and
- potential for high morbidity and mortality rates and major health impact.

Agents

- Emerging infectious diseases such as Nipah virus and hantavirus
- Content source: National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/>) /Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>) , National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/>)

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