

If I started anthrax vaccinations, but had doses delayed, do I have to restart the series?

✓ No, you will not have to restart the series. You will simply pick up where you left off. This follows national guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

✓ The protection of each additional dose builds on the immune response to earlier doses. This is like climbing steps on a ladder towards full protection.

If I have a health problem or adverse event after vaccination, what do I do?

✓ First, if a health problem occurs following any vaccination, seek medical care to take care of your immediate health problem. If your symptoms persist, you or your provider may contact the DoD Clinical Call Center at **866.210.6469**. Follow the instructions below to file a report with the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). We are committed to giving you the best care, no matter what caused the problem.

What about long-term side effects?

✓ This vaccine has been used for more than 35 years. Multi-year studies found no patterns of long-term health problems due to anthrax vaccination. A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems. The risk of anthrax vaccine causing serious harm or death, is extremely small.

When do I file a VAERS report?

✓ Adverse events after vaccination are reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). VAERS forms are available at www.vaers.hhs.gov or call **800.822.7967**. Healthcare workers and vaccine recipients are encouraged to report any severe events that require medical treatment and/or interfere with work or recreation. DoD requires VAERS reporting by healthcare workers for adverse events that cause hospitalization or loss of work for 24 hours or more.

✓ You or any healthcare provider (civilian or military) treating you may contact the Vaccine Healthcare Centers (VHC) Network for help with preparing a VAERS report or vaccine adverse event consultation.

I'm in the Reserve or National Guard. If I have an adverse event, can I go to a military hospital or clinic?

✓ Adverse events after military-directed vaccinations are in the "line-of-duty" (LOD). Some Reserve Component (RC) members may seek medical care from their private physicians, while others may seek medical care at a local military Medical Treatment Facility (MTF). For civilian health services outside a military Medical Treatment Facility, call: **888.MHS.MMSO (888.647.6676)**.

✓ Those who seek treatment for an adverse event related to an official immunization will be treated. Any necessary LOD documents shall be completed after treatment. If you see a civilian provider, notify your commander for the proper paperwork or Notice of Eligibility determination.

✓ Evaluation or treatment will not be denied or delayed, pending a line-of-duty determination.

What if I'm pregnant?

✓ Anthrax vaccinations should be deferred during pregnancy. If you are unsure if you are pregnant, you may request a pregnancy test from your medical provider **before being vaccinated**.

✓ A study at Fort Stewart found that women with a history of anthrax vaccinations get pregnant and give birth at the same rate as unvaccinated women. Outcomes of pregnancies are comparable in vaccinated and unvaccinated women. A recent study suggests that women who received anthrax vaccine during pregnancy concluded that birth defects were slightly more common when vaccinated in the first trimester.

✓ If you received the anthrax vaccine while pregnant, you are eligible and invited to join the BioThrax (Anthrax) Vaccine In Pregnancy Registry:

**nhrc-VaccineRegistry@med.navy.mil,
(619)553-9255, DSN 553-9255**

➔ For information about vaccine or policy,

Military Vaccine (MILVAX) Agency:

Websites: www.anthrax.mil or www.vaccines.mil

E-Mail: DODvaccines@mail.mil

Toll-Free: **877.GET.VACC (877.438.8222) DSN 761.4245**

➔ For medical advice, consultation or exemption assistance

DoD Vaccine Healthcare Centers

Website: www.vhcinfo.org

E-Mail: <https://askvhc.amedd.army.mil/Questions/NewQuestionUnRegistered.aspx>

Toll-Free: **866.210.6469**

To Civilian Healthcare Providers: If a Reservist or Active Duty service member presents to you for a condition that may be an adverse event caused by a military vaccination, please provide appropriate care. For authorization and payment, contact the **Medical Treatment Facility (MTF)** where the member is enrolled, OR contact the **Military Medical Support Office (MMSO)**, **888.647.6676** if not enrolled to an MTF.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ANTHRAX VACCINE



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CATEGORIES OF ELIGIBILITY

Mandatory — Anthrax vaccination is mandatory for uniformed personnel, emergency essential and comparable U.S. government civilian employees and contractors deployed (or deploying within 120 days) to U.S. CENTCOM or Korea areas of responsibility (AOR) for 15 or more consecutive days. Vaccinations are also mandatory for certain uniformed personnel assigned to special units (such as forward deployed forces) and units with biodefense-related missions.

Voluntary — Anthrax vaccination is voluntary for uniformed and civilian personnel no longer deployed to U.S. CENTCOM or Korea who have had at least one dose of anthrax vaccine and want to continue. Vaccinations are also voluntary for U.S. government civilian employees and contractors (not in the mandatory group) and family members of DoD personnel in U.S. CENTCOM or Korea for 15 or more consecutive days.

For more details on the specific criteria for each of these groups, please see applicable DoD and Service policies.

For more information:
1-877-GETVACC (877-438-8222) DSN 761-4245
www.anthrax.mil www.vaccines.mil
DODvaccines@mail.mil



FACTS ABOUT ANTHRAX, THE DISEASE

- ✓ Caused by bacteria called *Bacillus anthracis*
- ✓ Causes three types of infections (cutaneous, gastrointestinal, inhalation)
- ✓ Anthrax spores make a lethal weapon
- ✓ You can inhale anthrax spores and not even know it
- ✓ Inhalation anthrax is the most deadly form of anthrax (over 99% fatal if untreated)



FACTS ABOUT ANTHRAX VACCINE

- ✓ Licensed by the Federal Government since November 1970
- ✓ Cannot cause anthrax disease
- ✓ Given in a series of five doses: 0, 4 weeks, 6 months, 12 months, and 18 months, with annual boosters to sustain immunity
- ✓ Each dose builds on the immune response from earlier doses
- ✓ Without vaccination, you would be more vulnerable to anthrax infection



We understand this vaccine very well. Civilian medical organizations such as the CDC, FDA and Institute of Medicine have studied, reviewed and endorsed anthrax vaccine. They agree it is a safe and effective vaccine.

➤ ***The current policy states anthrax is mandatory for individuals in high-risk areas and performing certain roles.***

➤ ***If you are not covered by the mandatory program but you previously received one or more doses, you can continue receiving vaccinations on a voluntary basis.***

➤ ***On 15 December 2005, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a Final Order. FDA again found anthrax vaccine to be safe and effective in preventing anthrax, regardless of route of exposure.***

➤ ***Your military and civilian leaders continue to strongly recommend anthrax vaccination for your personal protection and for the sake of your mission.***

Information about anthrax vaccine...

- The FDA-licensed dosing schedule is 0, 4 weeks, 6 months, 12 months, and 18 months, plus annual boosters given intramuscularly.
- Injection site reactions, like burning, redness and swelling may occur. Women may experience more local reactions than men, but these reactions usually last only a few days.
- Systemic reactions, such as joint aches, headaches or a fever, are less common than injection-site reactions. These occur at rates similar to other vaccines.
- Report adverse events to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Get VAERS forms at www.vaers.hhs.gov or call **800.822.7967**. Healthcare workers and vaccine recipients are encouraged to report via VAERS any severe events, within 30 days of vaccination, that require medical treatment and/or interfere with work or recreation. DoD requires VAERS reporting by healthcare workers for adverse events that cause hospitalization or loss of work for 24 hours or more.

Who should not get anthrax vaccine?

- ✓ Some people should not get anthrax vaccine or should wait:
 - People who had a serious allergic reaction or other serious reaction to a prior dose
 - People who have a moderate or severe illness
 - Women who are pregnant or may be pregnant
 - People with a possible history of latex sensitivity
 - People HIV-infected and immune-suppressed
 - People who have had Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS)
 - People who recovered from anthrax infection
- ✓ You can request an evaluation for a medical exemption from your provider. If you or your provider need assistance with medical exemption questions, the Vaccine Healthcare Centers (VHC) Network is available for consultation services or referral.

What side effects can I expect?

- ✓ A burning sensation may occur immediately after getting anthrax vaccine and can last about a minute.
- ✓ Like other vaccines, anthrax vaccine may cause soreness, redness, itching, swelling and a small lump at the injection site.
- ✓ Women may experience more local reactions than men, but these reactions usually last only a few days.
- ✓ Larger injection-site reactions occur in about 2% of vaccinees.
- ✓ Other symptoms may occur such as muscle or joint aches, headaches, rashes, chills, low-grade fever or nausea. These symptoms usually go away in less than a week.
- ✓ Any vaccine, like any prescription drug, can cause serious reactions including those requiring hospitalization or medical care. Severe allergic reactions occur less than once per 100,000 doses.

How many shots will I receive?

- ✓ The FDA-licensed schedule for the anthrax vaccine is 5 doses given over 18 months: 0, 4 weeks, 6 months, 12 months, and 18 months, plus annual boosters given intramuscularly in the deltoid region of the upper arm. Do not receive your shots earlier than the due date.
- ✓ You should return to the vaccination clinic at the appropriate date under the shot schedule for your next dose (whether it is mandatory or voluntary), as long as you remain eligible to receive the vaccine.