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**BIOTERRORISM**

Bioterrorism is [terrorism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism) involving the intentional release or dissemination of [biological agents](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_agent). These agents are [bacteria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacteria), [viruses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virus), or [toxins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toxin), and may be in a naturally occurring or a human-modified form.

Bioterrorism Agent Categories

Bioterrorism agents can be separated into three categories, depending on how easily they can be spread and the severity of illness or death they cause. Category Aagents are considered the highest risk and Category C agents are those that are considered emerging threats for disease.

*Category A*

These high-priority agents include organisms or toxins that pose the highest risk to the public and national security because:

* They can be easily spread or transmitted from person to person
* They result in high death rates and have the potential for major public health impact
* They might cause public panic and social disruption
* They require special action for public health preparedness.

*Category B*

These agents are the second highest priority because:

* They are moderately easy to spread
* They result in moderate illness rates and low death rates
* They require specific enhancements of CDC's laboratory capacity and enhanced disease monitoring.

*Category C*

These third highest priority agents include emerging pathogens that could be engineered for mass spread in the future because:

* They are easily available
* They are easily produced and spread
* They have potential for high morbidity and mortality rates and major health impact.

Biological agents spread through the air, water, or in food. Some can also spread from person to person. They can be very hard to detect. They don't cause illness for several hours or days. Scientists worry that [anthrax](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/anthrax.html), [botulism](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/botulism.html), [Ebola](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ebola.html) and other [hemorrhagic fever](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hemorrhagicfevers.html) viruses, [plague](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/plague.html), or[smallpox](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/smallpox.html) could be used as biological agents.

Biodefense uses medical measures to protect people against bioterrorism. This includes medicines and vaccinations. It also includes medical research and preparations to defend against bioterrorist attacks