

**REGION I EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
STANDING MEDICAL ORDERS  
BLS**

**SMO: Anthrax -- Gastrointestinal**

**Revised Date:**

**Overview: The causative organism is Bacillus anthracis, an encapsulated, aerobic, gram positive spore-forming rod-shaped bacterium. Humans become infected by ingestion of spores from infected animals (e.g., sheep, goats or cattle), animal byproducts, such as hides or hair, or an intentional malicious act of bioterrorism. All suspected cases of anthrax must be reported to the local department of public health and the Illinois Department of Public Health.**

**INFORMATION NEEDED**

- Any recent exposure to sick goats, sheep or cattle
- Any recent exposure to animal byproducts, hides or hairs
- Suspected exposure to an intentional malicious act of bioterrorism
- Determination of any other causative agent that may cause the same signs and symptoms

**OBJECTIVE FINDINGS**

- Nausea, anorexia, vomiting and fever progressing to severe abdominal pain, bloody emesis and diarrhea (usually bloody)
- Acute abdominal pain with peritoneal signs developing
- About 2 to 4 days after the onset of symptoms, an abnormal pooling of fluid may develop in the abdominal cavity with increasing abdominal pain
- Shock and death 2 to 5 days after the onset of symptoms

**BLS**

- Standard isolation from contact with any skin lesions and the patient's body fluid
- Assess the patient for any other medical or trauma issues
- Vital signs including the patient's temperature
- Provide supplemental oxygenation as indicated by nasal cannula at 2-6 LPM or by non-rebreather mask at 10-15 LPM
- Support patient ventilatory effort as needed
- Suction as needed to maintain the airway
- Treat for shock

**Documentation of adherence to protocol:**

- History related to the incident
- Onset of signs and symptoms and progression of illness of the patient
- Measures taken to protect the patient, EMS personnel and personnel who will continue the care of the patient

**Medical Control Contact Criteria**

- Contact Medical Control if there is any suspicion of gastrointestinal anthrax exposure by the patient

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ALS**

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- **Nausea, anorexia, vomiting and fever progressing to severe abdominal pain, bloody emesis and diarrhea (usually bloody)**
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- **Shock and death 2 to 5 days after the onset of symptoms**

**ALS**

- Standard isolation from contact with any skin lesions and the patient's body fluid
- Assess the patient for any other medical or trauma issues
- Vital signs including the patient's temperature
- Provide supplemental oxygenation as indicated by nasal cannula at 2-6 LPM or by non-rebreather mask at 10-15 LPM
- Support patient ventilatory effort as needed
- Intubate or use the CombiTube if the patient cannot maintain an airway
- Suction as needed to maintain an airway
- Start an IV using NS
- Treat for shock

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