



### WHAT IS BIOTERRORISM?

Bioterrorism is the intentional use of disease to attack humans, plants, or animals. An important thing to know about bioterrorism is that it can create symptoms that are similar to naturally occurring illnesses such as flu, colds or chickenpox. Examples of how bioterrorism has been used to make people sick are:

- ◆ In Colonial Days British soldiers gave Native Americans blankets infected with smallpox. Entire tribes died as a result.
- ◆ Following 9/11, anthrax was sent through the mail, causing five deaths and widespread terror.

Sometimes, even experts have a difficult time telling what might be bioterrorism, and what might be the result of nature. In 1993, the water in Milwaukee, Wisconsin was contaminated, making hundreds of thousands of people sick, and causing many deaths. It was not terrorism, but a naturally occurring waterborne disease called cryptosporidium, which is resistant to chlorine.



### WHAT IS CHEMICAL TERRORISM?

Chemical terrorism is the use of a chemical to harm or kill people. Most chemicals work very fast, often within seconds. Some chemicals have colors and odors, but others are completely unnoticeable. For a chemical to cause harm, it must come in contact with the skin or mucous membranes, be inhaled, or swallowed.

Many hazardous chemicals are used in industry. Others are found in nature (for example, poisonous plants). Some can be made from everyday items such as household cleaners. Sometimes hazardous chemicals are accidentally released in an industrial or even a traffic accident. Recent examples of how chemical poisons have been used intentionally to make people sick are:

- ◆ In 2003 the coffee at a church social in Maine was poisoned with arsenic; and
- ◆ A supermarket employee in Michigan poisoned 200 pounds of ground beef with insecticide.

Chemical spills can be devastating too. In 1984 the accidental release of poisonous gas at a pesticide factory in India resulted in the deaths of 28,000 people.

### WHAT IS NUCLEAR or RADIOLOGICAL TERRORISM?



Nuclear or radiological terrorism is an intentional act by terrorists using an explosive device (such as a nuclear warhead, suitcase bomb or dirty bomb) that releases radiation. A radiological emergency could also be an accident caused by a leak at a nuclear power plant.

In most cases, there will be no immediate symptoms of radiation exposure or contamination outside the immediate blast area. Most injuries will be from the explosion itself. Signs of radiation "sickness" may take weeks to appear.

If there is a nuclear or chemical release incident, you may be told to "shelter-in-place," which means making wherever you are as safe as possible until it is safe to go outside.

Ask your supervisor what you should know about decontamination.




### QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU SUSPECT SOMETHING IS WRONG

- ◆ Are others ill? What's on the news?
- ◆ Have there been any unusual events or accidents?
- ◆ Has the patient been traveling or had guests from overseas?
- ◆ Is it a possible food-related illness?
- ◆ Does the patient have pets that roam outside? Are the pets sick?
- ◆ Are there a lot of mosquitoes or rodents in the house or yard?
- ◆ Has anyone else noticed anything?
- ◆ What does my supervisor think?

Any of the signs listed on the other side of this flyer might indicate an attack by terrorists, or they might be the result of an accidental chemical spill, radiation leak, food poisoning; or naturally occurring infectious disease outbreak. All might be dangerous!  
**REPORT ANYTHING UNUSUAL TO YOUR SUPERVISOR!**

TEAR THIS OFF AND KEEP WITH YOU FOR HANDY REFERENCE

<p><b>IMPORTANT PEOPLE &amp; PLACES</b></p> <p>Shelter: Directions to Shelter:</p> <p>Baby Sitter:</p> <p>School:</p> <p>Place to meet:</p> <p>Out of State Contact:</p> <p>Family numbers:</p> 	<p><b>IMPORTANT NUMBERS</b></p> <p>Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222</p> <p>Terrorism Tip Line Upstate: 1-866-SAFE-NYS NYC: 1-888-NYC-SAFE</p> <p>Local Red Cross:</p> <p>Fire Department:</p> <p>Police Department:</p>	<p><b>IMPORTANT NUMBERS</b></p> <p>Supervisor: (pager)</p> <p>Agency:</p> <p>Emergency Contact Number:</p> <p>Back Up Number:</p> <p>Emergency Broadcast Radio or TV Station:</p> <p>Local Emergency Office:</p>
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# HOME CAREGIVER GUIDE TO Nuclear Biological & Chemical Emergencies

This brochure is intended to help you, the caregiver, understand and prepare for emergencies that might endanger you, your patients, and your community. Be sure to write important phone numbers on the end leaf of this flyer, tear it off and keep it with you.



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## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

### MAKE SURE:

- ✓ You have an emergency plan in place for all your family for different times of day, including pets;
- ✓ You and your family understand basic emergency response terms such as "shelter-in-place" and evacuation, and you have enough emergency food and supplies on hand for three days;
- ✓ You keep personal protective equipment with you at all times;
- ✓ You know your employer's emergency plans and contacts;
- ✓ Your patients have adequate supplies, including medications, for three days, and you know their emergency plans and contacts;
- ✓ You've planned with babysitters and loved ones to meet family responsibilities if someone needs to work, or can't get home from work;
- ✓ You keep a list of emergency contact numbers, radio stations, and other important names, places, and numbers with you at all times;
- ✓ You keep up to date on daily news;
- ✓ You and your patients have "Go" bags in case you need to evacuate;
- ✓ You know where nearby shelters are located, and have a map available.

**TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR  
AHEAD OF TIME SO YOU  
ARE AS READY AS POSSIBLE FOR  
AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.**

Home Care Association of New York State, Inc. HOME CARE AWARE POCKET GUIDE

### RECOGNIZING BIOTERRORISM RELATED ILLNESS

Signs that might indicate an act of bioterrorism, or intentional use of disease to cause harm to humans or animals, are:

- Unusual numbers of sick or dying people and/or animals;
- Sudden illness in previously healthy people;
- Outbreaks of diseases such as cold or flu "out-of-season";
- Outbreak of a rare disease such as smallpox or plague;
- Unusual spraying activities.

Likely agents: anthrax, smallpox and plague. Many illnesses have flu-like symptoms, and may not be noticed at first.

### RECOGNIZING CHEMICAL TERRORISM RELATED ILLNESS

Most chemical agents work very fast. For a chemical weapon to cause harm, it must come in contact with the skin or mucous membranes, be inhaled, or swallowed. Signs that might indicate a chemical attack are:

- Mass casualties, or many illnesses within a small area OR in groups of people;
- Many people choking, with skin blisters, rashes, nausea, disorientation or convulsions;
- Many dead insects, animals, birds, fish or unusual dead trees and plants at the same time;
- Unusual liquid droplets or wet areas; unexplained odors; low lying cloud or fog.

### RECOGNIZING RADIATION RELATED ILLNESS

Effects of exposure to radiation can take days or weeks to be noticed. Most immediate injuries will be from the explosion itself. Some symptoms might be similar to those for chemical exposure. Specific symptoms of radiation poisoning or sickness, which may take up to 2-3 weeks to be noticed, are:

- Unexplained burns or skin lesions;
- A tendency to bleed and/or hair loss;
- Symptom clusters such as:
  - Headache, fatigue, weakness
  - Skin damage, and ulceration
  - Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
  - Bruising, infections