

Biological Emergencies

A biological emergency occurs when germs are released during an accident or attack. Germs can be sprayed into the air or released in food or drinking water. These germs must be inhaled, absorbed through the skin or eaten to make people sick. Some germs can also be spread from person to person.

A biological emergency may not be noticed until health care workers find a pattern of illness. If so, local or state officials will let you know what signs to look for in reports on the television, radio and Internet.

During this type of emergency, you may not know if you were exposed to these germs, but it is important to stay calm and watch for signs. Signs depend on the type of germ but may include trouble breathing and signs of the flu. Do not assume that any illness is the result of the accident or attack. If you feel sick, call your doctor right away or go to the hospital.

During a Biological Emergency

Listen for reports on the television, radio or Internet.

- Local or state officials will tell you what signs to look for.
- Officials will tell you whether to stay inside or leave your home and if so, where to go.

If you see or suspect a release of an unknown substance:

1. Leave the area right away.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with fabric to filter the air but still allow breathing.
3. Take off your clothes and put them in a plastic bag. Seal the bag tightly.
4. Take a shower or wash your skin and hair well with soap and water.
5. Put on clean clothes.
6. Seek medical care.
7. Call the police if they are not aware of the biological emergency. They will take steps to help people avoid getting sick.