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Special Release

15 September, 2023

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

RE: ANTHRAX - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW/DO

The Federal Government of Nigeria recently confirmed its first case of Anthrax disease in the country.

Anthrax is an acute infectious disease caused by spores of the bacteria known as *Bacillus Anthracis* which can affect both humans and animals. The bacteria can be found as spores in the soil as well as in wool, or hair of infected animals. People can get infected with anthrax mainly by getting spores in a cut or scrape in skin, breathing in spores, as well as by eating food or drinking water that is contaminated with spores which leads to the cutaneous (skin), inhalation (lungs) and gastrointestinal (stomach and intestine) Anthrax respectively. It could also occur (though less commonly) by using contaminated injections which leads to injection anthrax.

Symptoms of disease vary depending on how the disease was contracted, and usually occur within 7 days but can take up to 60 days after exposure. Such symptoms may include flu like symptoms, usually painless skin redness and swelling with a black centre, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, bleeding from orifices, shock.

Recommended standard precautions include:

- ⊗ Adequate vaccination and other care of all livestock as and when due.
- ⊗ Avoidance of infected livestock and hides from infected animals
- ⊗ Abstain from eating meat that is not well cooked
- ⊗ Adequate hand hygiene
- ⊗ Avoid the use of illegal drugs and the sharing of needles
- ⊗ Use of appropriate protective equipment.
- ⊗ Safe waste management
- ⊗ Cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and equipment.
- ⊗ Early reporting and prompt treatment of illness.
- ⊗ No animal suspected to be ill with anthrax should be slaughtered or eaten.
- ⊗ Any animal suspected to be ill with or have died from Anthrax should be reported to the veterinarians.

Even though vaccination against anthrax exists, it is only recommended for a limited group of highly at-risk individuals, e.g., persons working in specialised Anthrax laboratories, military personnel at risk of Bioterrorism, Vet workers and those handling livestock and wild games, etc.

The UHS is at alert and in touch with relevant government agencies and stakeholders.

Anyone with relevant information should please reach out to:
Director of Health Services on **08033272111** or **08182541995**

Thank you.

G. O. Saliu, MANUPA, MNIM, MAUA
Registrar and Secretary to Council