

# Local Doctors Brush Up on Anthrax to Meet Public Fears/Threats

(AP) — Public health departments in Oregon have been handling lots of calls from people who fear they have been exposed to anthrax.

All tests have been negative and the state has not received any specific bioterrorism threats, health officials said Monday.

But, just in case, family and emergency doctors and nurses are brushing up on their knowledge of anthrax and other diseases most likely to be used by bioterrorists.

Though a successful attack in the region is very unlikely, doctors say, they need to know how to diagnose and treat the disease,

along with whom to contact if they discover a case of bioterrorism.

"Two months ago, or two years ago, most people wouldn't even be thinking about this," said Dr. Terry Olson, a primary care doctor with Providence Health System. "But now physicians will be extra careful."

Doctors said they're also being careful to reassure patients that the risk of an anthrax infection is small. Before the recent incidents in Florida and elsewhere, only 18 cases of inhaled anthrax had been diagnosed in humans in the past 75 years in the United States, said Dr. Gary Oxman,

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—Dr. Terry Olson, Providence Health System

Multnomah County health officer.

Given the rarity, health officials are cautioning people not to rush to their doctors at the first sign of flu-like symptoms. If people have reason to think they've been exposed to bioterrorism, they should

call the police and go see a doctor.

Responding to bioterrorism relies on doctors' spotting attacks when patients show up. Across the Northwest, public and private doctors are taking steps to make sure that would happen — a task especially difficult for anthrax.

Dr. Jon Jui, an Oregon Health & Science University emergency room physician and the medical director for Multnomah County Emergency Services, said diagnosing anthrax in the early stages would be tough because the symptoms mimic the flu.

"This would be very difficult to see on the front lines," Jui said. "What makes it worse is we're

just kicking off the flu season."

Last week, OHSU emergency room physicians made bioterrorism a topic for grand rounds, the regular lectures delivered by experts that are open to all doctors, interns and residents. The session was open to both OHSU staff and Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center staff.

All 11,000 OHSU employees around the state this week will get information laying out the signs of exposure to various biological agents, as well as emergency contacts for questions.

Other public and private health groups are taking similar steps.

## Halloween Carnival

It's a carnival of Halloween holiday fun — games, crafts, tattoos, and face painting! Admission is one can of food per person for Sunshine Division. For age 3 & up with adult.

The carnival will be held at the Peninsula Park Community Center, located at 700 N. Portland Blvd. For more info., call 503-823-3620.

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