



HEALTH AWARENESS

Anthrax: A Threat To You?

(NAPSA)—While it appears the chances are extremely small that any one individual American will be affected by anthrax, physicians and government agencies agree, it's better to be safe than sorry. To that end, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recently released guidelines on how to minimize the risk of infection.

For one thing, corporate mail-room workers and other mail handlers are advised to wear protective gloves while on the job as postal workers do.

The CDC also stresses the importance of proper hand washing, saying hands should be thoroughly washed with soap and water when gloves are removed, before eating and when replacing torn or worn gloves. Soap and water will wash away most spores that may have contacted the skin. Wash hands thoroughly, including the wrists, palms, back of hands, fingers and underneath fingernails, with soap and water. Rub soap-lathered hands together for ten to 15 seconds and then rinse.

As an additional method of protection, many people are turning to hand sanitizers already available over the counter. For example, Preventx® Hand Sanitizer and First Aid Antiseptic from publicly traded Empyrean Bioscience, Inc., is alcohol-free and kills 99.9 percent of disease-causing germs for up to four hours. In addition, it's aloe-enriched to moisturize and condition skin.

Recently, Preventx underwent in vitro testing for effectiveness against bacillus anthracis, the



Caution and common sense can help ease anthrax fears.

organism that causes anthrax. The laboratory data indicated that the product is effective against both the vegetative and the spore form of *B. anthracis*.

The bacterium, which can be found naturally in soil and other places, can form a protective coat or spore around itself and can release poisonous substances in the bodies of infected people and animals. The first symptom of cutaneous (skin) anthrax is a small, painless sore that develops into a blister. A day or two later, the blister develops a black scab at the center. Treatment often consists of a regimen of antibiotics such as Ciprofloxacin for 60 days.

Exercise good judgement if you receive anything suspicious in the mail and keep your hands as clean and germ-free as possible by washing properly and often.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov and www.preventx.com.