



***EARLY TREATMENT CAN  
SAVE YOUR LIFE.***

**If you suspect you may have  
anthrax go to your nearest A&E**

**If you want advice on local drug  
treatment services contact:**

**Know The Score  
0800 587 587 9**

[www.scottishdrugservices.com](http://www.scottishdrugservices.com)

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# **ANTHRAX**

**IS KILLING HEROIN USERS  
ACROSS SCOTLAND**



**READ THIS -  
IT MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE**

***EARLY TREATMENT WITH ANTIBIOTICS  
CAN BE LIFE SAVING.***

ScottishdrugsForum

**NHS**  
SCOTLAND

# ANTHRAX

## What is anthrax?

Anthrax is a bug which doctors think got into some batches of heroin sold across Scotland. It can kill if not treated quickly. A number of people in Scotland have died from the anthrax bug.

## How can you get anthrax?

All anthrax infections in recent weeks have been among heroin users. You can get anthrax by both injecting and smoking heroin.

## How can I tell if my heroin is contaminated with anthrax?

Unfortunately, there is no way of telling if the heroin you have is contaminated with the anthrax bug. It may look the same and it may dissolve or burn the same but it could still contain anthrax.

## What are the Symptoms?

**If injecting heroin** – you may have swelling and redness at the injecting site leading to an abscess or ulcer. You may have other symptoms such as fever and headache.

**If smoking heroin** – you may have a fever or flu like symptoms, feel sick and find it hard to breathe.

## What should I do if I have these symptoms?

If you have any of the symptoms you need to get medical help quickly. Go to A&E as soon as possible.

# HOW TO REDUCE THE RISKS

- 1) There is no safe way of taking heroin.
- 2) Stop using heroin and if not at least use less.
- 3) Go to your local drug treatment service to discuss alternatives such as methadone.
- 4) If you continue to use heroin, don't share needles, syringes, cookers/spoons or other 'works' with other drug users.

## BE AWARE OF THE EARLY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

- Redness and swelling at the site of injecting heroin
- Fever and flu like symptoms if heroin is smoked

## ...AND SEEK HELP AT YOUR NEAREST A&E

Please tell others about this infection.  
Early treatment with antibiotics can be life saving.