

Terrorism. Never before in our history has the need for watchfulness been so great. Terrorism is not only an attack using weapons of mass destruction or chemicals, but also includes weapons of viruses, bacteria, and other germs. This form of terrorism is called bioterrorism.

The effects of an attack using chemicals or radiation would be immediate and therefore need to be acted upon quickly. But many critical hours or even days could silently go by before we might know about the devastating effects of an attack using a dangerous disease-causing germ.

The diseases that could be used by terrorists are divided into different categories -- A through C. The videos you will find on the CDC website describe the Category A diseases which include: smallpox, anthrax, botulism, plague, tularemia, and viral hemorrhagic fevers.

If these germs were used to intentionally infect people, they would cause the most illness and death. Some of them can be spread through air; others can be spread through water or food supplies. Diseases, such as plague and smallpox, were long ago used as weapons by mankind. More recently, anthrax was intentionally used in the United States, leading to several deaths and creating widespread panic.

As we continue to remain vigilant, the United States government has taken important measures to put into place preparedness and emergency plans to help prevent and respond to any future attacks using weapons of disease. At the end of this presentation, you will find resources and phone numbers for more information about bioterrorism.