



Your Health

Deadliest Diseases©

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Vocabulary & pronunciation study by Laurent Dufour ©

Words are explained alongside the text

Stressed syllables are underlined and in bold*

Welcome to Your Health, brought to you by The Medical Frontier Medical news, simplified, on twitter@MedFrontier

If you think you're having a bad day, the following article may **cheer** you **up** – count your **lucky stars** that you don't have any of the following **illnesses**. Today's broadcast will be focusing on the world's **deadliest diseases**. Of course there are many diseases that can be **considered** just as bad as these but in the **interest** of time we'll focus on three of the top killers.

You may or may not have heard of a disease called **Botulism**. Botulism is a rare but **serious paralytic** illness caused by a nerve **toxin** that is **produced** by the Botulism **Bacteria**. The most **common** way of getting botulism is through eating foods that **contain** the Botulism toxin. This route is also the one that gets the most **media** attention as many people can get **poisoned** by eating **contaminated** food causing a public health **emergency**. You can also get Botulism through **infected** cuts or eating the bacteria that makes the toxin. There are **roughly** 145 cases of Botulism **reported** in the US, and even less in the UK and France, so thankfully it's not very common.

The **classic symptoms** of botulism include double vision, **blurred vision**, **drooping** eyelids, **slurred** speech, **difficulty swallowing**, dry mouth, and muscle weakness. **Infants** with botulism appear **lethargic**, feed poorly, are **constipated**, and have a weak cry. These are all symptoms of the muscle **paralysis** caused by the bacterial toxin. If **untreated**, these symptoms may

to cheer up (phrasal vb.) to make happier

one's lucky stars (exp.) one's good fortune

illness (n.) disease

roughly (adv.) approximately

blurred vision (n.) inability to see clearly

drooping (adj.) hanging down heavily

slurred (adj.) difficult to understand

to swallow (vb.) to take food or liquid down the throat with a muscular action

infant (n.) child during the earliest period of its life, baby

progress to cause paralysis of the respiratory muscles, arms, legs, and trunk.

Our second disease is called Anthrax. Anthrax is a serious infectious disease caused by a bacterium known as *Bacillus Anthracis*. It can be found naturally in soil and commonly affects domestic and wild animals around the world. Although it is rare, people can get sick with Anthrax if they come in contact with infected animals or contaminated animal products. Contact with Anthrax can cause severe illness in both humans and animals.

People get infected with Anthrax when spores get into the body. When Anthrax spores get inside the body, they can be "activated." When they become active, the bacteria can multiply, spread out in the body, produce toxins (poisons), and cause severe illness. This can happen when people breathe in spores, eat food or drink water that is contaminated with spores, and get spores in a cut or scrape in the skin. Animals with Anthrax often just die without any apparent symptoms. Initial symptoms may resemble a common cold—sore throat, mild fever, muscle aches, and malaise. After a few days, the symptoms may progress to severe breathing problems and shock, and ultimately, death. Anthrax is often in the news as it can be used for biological warfare. The good news is that Anthrax is not contagious and so cannot be spread like a cold or flu. Anthrax can be treated using antibiotics, the earlier the treatment, the better the chance of survival.

The final disease we'll be talking about is Smallpox or Variola. This is a disease that is highly contagious and is often thought of as the most deadly disease ever to have spread across the human population. If you were unlucky enough to catch the more serious version of the disease, it had a fatality rate of around 30%. Believe it or not, even to this day, there is no proven treatment for Smallpox. You can only prevent it through vaccination. Having said that, some anti-viral drugs have shown to be able to treat smallpox cases with some success.

Smallpox symptoms start off with flu-like signs including: fever, headache, severe tiredness, severe back pain and vomiting. A few days later, flat, red spots can appear first on your face, hands and forearms, and later on your

trunk(n.) upper body, torso

to spread out (spread-spread)
(phrasal vb.) to be disseminated

to breathe in (phrasal vb.) to inhale

scrape (n.) scratch on body

sore throat (n.) painful throat infection

mild (adj.) moderate in degree

ache (n.) pain

warfare (n.) conflict

flu (n.) influenza, infectious illness usually causing headache, fever, a cold, etc

to prevent (vb.) to keep from occurring

anti-viral (adj.) that combats viral infection

forearm (n.) part of the arm between the elbow and the wrist

abdomen. Within a day or two, many of these **lesions** turn into small **blisters** filled with clear **fluid**, which then turns into pus. **Scabs** begin to form eight to nine days later and **eventually** fall off, leaving deep, **pitted scars**. It can be **extremely** deforming.

To end on some more **uplifting** news – **despite** how dangerous it is, smallpox was declared **eradicated** in 1980 due to global **immunization**. There are still some minor **concerns** that smallpox could be used for **bioterrorism**, although most countries have **stockpiled** enough Smallpox **vaccines** to **cover** their population, in case of any **outbreaks**.

This week's advice: It's a good idea to be aware of these diseases, but not a good idea to worry about getting them. Keep in mind that these are rare and especially **lethal** conditions that you will more than **likely** never have the **misfortune** of getting.

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blister (n.) thin swelling on the skin containing watery matter

scab (n.) crust formed over a sore or wound

eventually (adv.) finally

pitted (adj.) depressed, pock-marked

scar (n.) mark left by a healed wound

uplifting (adj.) offering hope, encouragement

concern (n.) anxiety

to stockpile (vb.) to accumulate

outbreak (n.) sudden beginning of something unpleasant

lethal (adj.) causing death

likely (adv.) probably

* Tips !

Note the stress pattern in the adjectives ending in – IC/ICAL :
biological, **classic**, **domestic**, **lethargic**, **paralytic**

Note the stress pattern in the nouns ending in – ION :
attention, **condition**, **immunization**, **lesion**, **population**, **vaccination**, **version**, **vision**