Epidemiologic Clues of a Biologic Warfare or Terrorist Attack

- The presence of a large epidemic with a similar disease or syndrome, especially in a discrete population
- Many cases of unexplained diseases or deaths
- More severe disease than is usually expected for a specific pathogen or failure to respond to standard therapy
- Unusual routes of exposure for a pathogen, such as the inhalational (breathing in) route for diseases that normally occur through other exposures
- A disease that is unusual for a given geographic area or transmission season
- Disease normally transmitted by a vector that is not present in the local area
- Multiple simultaneous or serial epidemics of different diseases in the same population
- A single case of disease by an uncommon agent (smallpox, some viral hemorrhagic fevers)
- A disease that is unusual for an age group
- Unusual strains or variants of organisms or antimicrobial resistance patterns different from those circulating
- Similar genetic type among agents isolated from distinct sources at different times or locations
- Higher attack rates in those exposed in certain areas, such as inside a building if released indoors, or lower rates in those inside a sealed building if released outside
- Disease outbreaks of the same illness occurring in noncontiguous areas
- A disease outbreak with zoonotic impact
- Intelligence of a potential attack, claims by a terrorist or aggressor of a release, and discovery of munitions or tampering

Most of this information is courtesy of US Government CDC. In times of an emergency, much of this material may not apply when it comes to specialized care and testing. These are guidelines to help you when that care is not available. Some of this information is very technical and difficult to understand, but hopefully someone will be available for help in treatment and understanding.

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