DEADLY PATHOGENS

● Smallpox is a highly contagious, untreatable virus. Wild smallpox was eradicated decades ago, but the Soviet Union and others experimented with turning laboratory supplies of smallpox virus into bioweapons, so the virus still exists. If the virus was used by terrorists, the world would be vulnerable because no one has been vaccinated in decades. Vaccine a few days after exposure to smallpox can protect, but there are only 6-7 million doses left in the United States.

● Anthrax is more deadly if people inhale the germ spores -- 80 percent of the infected die -- and is believed more readily available than smallpox. But the infection is not spread person-to-person like smallpox. The military is getting vaccinated, but there isn't enough for civilians. However, antibiotics given before symptoms appear can prevent disease.

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