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JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VISITORS TO MANHATTAN EYE EAR AND THROAT HOSPITAL
ADVISED TO DISCONTINUE ANTIBIOTIC TREATMENT**

The New York City Department of Health has announced that environmental tests conducted for anthrax contamination at the Manhattan Eye Ear and Throat Hospital are negative. Due to this finding, all of the hospital's employees, patients and visitors who were started on preventive antibiotic therapy are advised to discontinue medication.

"Prompted by the diagnosis of inhalational anthrax in an employee of the hospital earlier last week, everyone who spent at least one hour at the Manhattan Eye Ear and Throat Hospital since October 11, 2001 was advised by the New York City Department of Health to contact their healthcare providers to start a course of antibiotic treatment as a precautionary measure against anthrax infection," said Joshua Lipsman, M.D., M.P.H., Westchester County Health Commissioner. "Since there is now no evidence that the workplace was the site of exposure, the New York City Department of Health is advising that those individuals who were placed on antibiotics discontinue treatment. Taking antibiotics unnecessarily can cause bacteria to mutate into antibiotic-resistant forms that are much harder to treat, as well as cause unpleasant medical side effects," he cautioned.

To respond to concerns of Westchester County residents, the Health Department has set up a Health Department Information Line at (914) 813-5609. The Information Line is operational 24 hours a day on an automated basis and is staffed by Health Department personnel weekdays from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. For more information on anthrax, residents can visit the Health Department's website at www.westchestergov.com/health.

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