

GET READY

Preparing for Flu ...

How it helps to prepare for natural and manmade disasters

You may be asking yourself why you should prepare for a flu pandemic. But the question, really, is why shouldn't you? Beyond making sure you're ready for when a flu pandemic or an outbreak of an infectious disease like severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) hits your community, taking steps to prepare yourself, your family and community for pandemic flu also helps you to prepare for:

- A severe winter blizzard
- A tornado
- A hurricane
- An act of bioterrorism or chemical terrorism
- And much, much more.

The basic steps to prepare for these disasters and emergencies are very much the same. This is what experts call all-hazards preparedness.

The Importance of Having a Plan

Does your household have a plan of what to do should a flu pandemic, bioterrorist attack or natural disaster strike your community? Have you discussed with your family, friends, roommates, employees and employers:

- How you would communicate with each other in the event of an emergency?
- What would happen if, due to some kind of emergency, you had to stay in your home for weeks at a time?
- Whether you would be able to telecommute for work?

- How people with special health needs in your home or your community would be taken care of? What about their medications?
- What you would do if schools, day care facilities, grocery stores and pharmacies closed?
- What you would do if you lost power for days at a time?

Answering these questions doesn't just help you be better prepared for pandemic flu—they are relevant for many disasters and emergencies, ranging from a severe blizzard to an anthrax attack to a hurricane.



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Having an Emergency Supply Kit

To prepare for pandemic flu along with most natural and manmade disasters, experts recommend that you have enough food and water in your home for two weeks.

This means:

- At least one gallon of water for each person in your household, per day.
- Food that does not require refrigeration, cooking or water.
- Making sure that people with health conditions like high blood pressure have healthful foods to eat. For help, be sure to read labels carefully and ask your doctor for advice.
- Having a manual can opener.



Your kit in the very least should also include first aid supplies, latex gloves, surgical masks, a flashlight, batteries, a battery-powered radio or TV, matches and a utility knife.

How Will Your Community Function?

In the event of a flu pandemic or other disaster or emergency, your daily routine, life and events in your community will not be like you're used to. To prepare, ask the workers at the places that you go to weekly how they will continue operating in the event of an emergency. For example:

- How do first responders in your community—police, fire department and EMS—plan to communicate with you to keep you up to date as to what is happening?
- Will your local health department or hospital be setting up a telephone hotline to give people directions and advice over the phone if they become sick and can't leave their homes?
- Will your local food bank continue delivering food in your community? If so, how will their delivery services change? In the event of a flu pandemic, how will they limit personal contact during delivery and the collection of donations?
- Does your church, synagogue or other place of worship plan to offer their services via the Internet or telephone if face-to-face gatherings are not possible?
- If schools are shut down, will classes be offered on the TV, radio, online or by telephone via a conference call? Will schools be used for medical services or as emergency shelters?
- How will transportation services be affected? Will buses and trains continue to run? Will certain roads be closed?
- Does your pharmacy plan to stockpile additional common medications that will be in high demand in case of an emergency? Do they have a plan to deliver needed medicine to very sick people?



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