

Get Ready E-Newsletter



The Get Ready campaign, sponsored by APHA, will provide information, resources so that all individuals, families and communities in the United States are more prepared for a potential influenza pandemic, outbreak of an emerging infectious disease or other hazard or disaster.



APHA's Get Ready Campaign

Launched in 2006, APHA's Get Ready campaign is working to help individuals, their families and their communities become prepared for an influenza pandemic or outbreak of emerging infectious disease. The campaign includes a Web site, fact sheets, a blog, podcasts, merchandise, news and other resources. APHA's state and local affiliated public health associations are working to bring the campaign to the community level.

The Get Ready campaign was created to provide Americans with straightforward, easy-to-understand information and tools that will help them become more prepared. Helping Americans prepare for pandemic flu and other emerging infectious diseases also strengthens their preparedness for other hazards or disasters. Health workers and civic groups can share information from the campaign with community residents, and the public can download information directly from the Web site.



Welcome

Welcome to the Get Ready Campaign quarterly newsletter. This newsletter provides up to date information on APHA's Get Ready Campaign, as well as opportunities for your participation in the campaign.

What's New

Help make sure your friends and loved ones are prepared this Valentine's Day

As Valentine's Day rapidly approaches, why not take some time to make sure that those who matter most to you are prepared for a pandemic, disease outbreak or other disaster? This month's Get Ready Report from the American Public Health Association has tips to share with your friends and loved ones!

Get Ready: Set Your Clocks, Check Your Stocks!

When it's time to change your clocks because of daylight-saving time next month, remember to check your preparedness kit to make sure your emergency stockpile isn't missing any items and that the food hasn't expired. APHA's Get Ready: [Set Your Clocks, Check Your Stocks](#) campaign is reminding people to refresh their emergency supplies before a disease outbreak or disaster occurs. If you haven't created a stockpile yet, now is the time to create one!

Be sure that you have at least a three-day supply of bottled water, non-perishable foods and essential medications set aside for each member of your family. There are a lot of options available for [creating a healthy stockpile](#), including low-sodium, low-fat canned food. Check out our Q&A on [healthy stockpiling](#) for more tips. And as always, don't forget to check the batteries in your smoke alarms!

This is also perfect time to re-familiarize yourself with your community's emergency preparedness plan, including evacuation routes, emergency shelters and the location of food banks. As we eagerly prepare for the arrival of spring, make sure you and your loved ones are prepared for a possible public health emergency. Stockpile checklists, tip sheets, logos and other materials will be available on the Get Ready: [Set Your Clocks, Check Your Stocks](#) Web site starting Feb. 22.

New Get Ready Web site help kids learn about preparedness

Have fun while learning about preparedness and pandemic flu! The [Get Ready Kids Fun Site](#) features a Kids' Guide with child-friendly questions and answers about the flu and games such as connect-the-dots, crossword puzzles and word searches. The site also offers a family checklist so children can get involved in family preparedness plans and links to other materials for kids and parents. Happy learning!

Climate change: Another reason to be prepared

Changes in the climate are causing more severe weather events, such as heat waves, high winds, snowstorms, floods and hurricanes. These extreme weather conditions have the potential to dramatically affect our health and safety -- and to increase the spread of infectious diseases. And, yes, this emerging threat is another good reason to be prepared.

Learn more about the connections between health and climate change and what you can do to help reduce its impact during APHA's [National Public Health Week](#), April 7-13, 2008. Visit the [Web site](#) and check out the climate change [blog](#), logos and other materials to help send the message to your families, friends and colleagues. For more information or to get involved, contact kaitlin.sheedy@apha.org.

Why is seasonal flu the eighth leading cause of death in the United States?

In a country with some of the most advanced medical technology, why do so many Americans die from a simple, seemingly preventable virus?

Each year, seasonal influenza, also known as the flu, kills an average of 36,000 people. The number of deaths from flu has been steadily increasing since the late 1970s, and scientists suggest that this trend will continue. While there are many reasons why the flu continues to be life-threatening, there are two underlying factors that explain not only why so many people die of the flu, but why the number of deaths continues to rise.

The first reason for our heavy flu burden is our aging U.S. population. The majority of Americans who die from influenza are older than age 65. As our population ages, and the baby boomers reach their later years, it is likely that the number of deaths from flu will continue to rise among older adults. As their immune systems are more likely to be



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Older adults, as their immune systems are more likely to be compromised than younger adults, older adults are more likely to catch the flu and then subsequently suffer more severe symptoms as their bodies attempt to fight off infection. Simply put, as more people live to be older, the number of flu infections and deaths among older adults will increase as well.

Another reason why the flu continues to be such a problem is our need for better vaccines. Vaccination remains the best defense against flu infection, regardless of how old you are. However, flu vaccines are not 100 percent effective. In reality, the vaccines we have are only 68 percent effective in preventing death from complications of flu infections. Effectiveness is even lower in older adults with chronic conditions. Experts agree that a more effective vaccine is necessary to combat the most virulent and common strains of flu. Until such a vaccine is available, flu will continue to be a lethal threat to the most vulnerable Americans: the old, the young and the ill.

Legislative Update

Federal funding supports pandemic flu preparedness

Since 2004, Congress has appropriated more than \$6 billion for pandemic flu preparedness. This is in addition to the funds appropriated for all other emergency preparedness efforts, which are important for pandemic flu preparedness.

Funding for pandemic flu is primarily directed to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, generally through the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund, which is intended for one-time or short-term activities. This money has been used for enhancing domestic vaccine production, purchasing pandemic flu countermeasures, increasing state and local public health department capacity, improving domestic and global surveillance, increasing the capacity of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, supporting international activities and increasing the capacity of the Food and Drug Administration to safeguard the food supply.

Fiscal year 2008 omnibus appropriations included \$155 million for CDC to continue ongoing pandemic influenza activities. The original omnibus bill included \$158 million, but was reduced to ensure President Bush would sign the bill into law. In addition, the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund received \$74.8 million, reduced from \$76.1 million. The fund currently has approximately \$1.8 billion in unobligated funds from prior appropriations.

President Bush's 2009 budget proposal

President Bush's budget request for fiscal year 2009, released in February, proposes \$820 million for pandemic flu preparedness. This would include \$507 million to expand egg-based vaccine capacity and stockpile medical countermeasures and medical supplies for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services employee and patient populations. The additional \$313 million would fund ongoing activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health and the HHS Office of the Secretary, such as expanding domestic and international surveillance capabilities; accelerating research and development of rapid diagnostic tests; and developing a vaccine registry to assess vaccine distribution, safety and efficacy.

Get Ready for Valentine's Day

Who needs a box of chocolates? Buy them a Get Ready T-shirt instead this Valentine's Day



What better way to say "I love you" than by encouraging that someone special to protect themselves against flu or other emerging infectious diseases? Show them you care by giving a stylish Get Ready T-shirt, hoodie or other gear. The Get Ready "value T-shirt" is specially priced at \$9.99, so get them while they're hot! Check out this T-shirt and other fun gear at the [Get Ready store](#). Kids, plus and dog sizes also available!

Send a Get Ready Valentine!

Forward this issue of the Get Ready Report and a Valentine's Day wish to five people you care about to help them learn more about becoming prepared for pandemic flu and other emerging infectious diseases. To sign up to receive this quarterly newsletter and other Get Ready updates, send your e-mail address to kaitlin.cheedy@apha.org.

About APHA

The American Public Health Association is the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world, dedicated to protecting all Americans and their communities from preventable, serious health threats and assuring community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and preventive health services are universally accessible in the United States. Visit our Web site at www.apha.org.