

Personal Preparedness for an Emergency...

Pandemic Flu/Disease or Natural Disaster

A message from Otter Tail County Public Health

No matter how much we prepare for it, we won't be able to completely stop a pandemic disease or natural disaster in its tracks. Any pandemic disease or natural disaster will have a major impact on our lives – and we need to be ready for that. But together, we can get through it.

Protect yourself and your family

Getting ready for an emergency starts *now* – and there's a lot you can do.

Stay healthy. Keep yourself in shape. Eat nutritious foods, don't smoke, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. And get a flu shot every fall, so you're protected against ordinary "seasonal" flu.

Learn how to avoid spreading disease.

Practice "respiratory etiquette." Start developing habits that will help you avoid getting – or spreading – infectious diseases. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue – or the upper part of your sleeve – when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the tissue afterward. Wash your hands thoroughly – and frequently. If you don't have access to soap and water, use an alcohol-based, waterless hand cleaner.

Develop a family emergency plan. Know how you'll get in touch with each other – and where you'll gather as a family – in an emergency. Know where you'll go, and what you'll do. Keep a list of emergency phone numbers in a handy place. Know what routes you will use if you have to evacuate. Store emergency numbers in your cell phones under "ICE" ("In Case of Emergency") so if you're unable to call, someone else can call for you. Use more than one entry ("ICE-1," "ICE-2," etc.) if you have more than one emergency number.

Create an emergency kit. Make sure your kit has everything you'll need to get by if you have to remain at home for a period of time – up to two weeks, if possible. Be sure to include:

- A supply of drinking water (one gallon per person per day) and nonperishable food.
- Basic equipment like a flashlight, battery-operated radio, and a supply of batteries. Be sure to include a manual can opener.
- Personal care products – soap, toiletries, waterless hand cleaner, extra glasses or contact lenses, prescription and over-the-counter drugs, tissues and toilet paper, and any special items for infants or people with special health needs.
- A good first aid kit.
- Kitchen utensils and dishwashing supplies.
- Extra clothing and bedding.
- Critical miscellaneous items – notebook & pen, whistle, money & credit cards, extra car keys, medical and insurance information, and copies of other important documents.
- Games, reading material, and other entertainment items – for children and adults. You might need to stay home for a while during a pandemic or natural disaster.

Recommended websites for further information:

- ❖ www.codeready.org
- ❖ www.pandemicflu.gov
- ❖ www.cdc.gov/swineflu.
- ❖ http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance_homecare.htm
- ❖ <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2009/04/30/midday2/>