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Creating A Healthy Environment For The Community

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## Family Preparedness and Planning Guidance

Community strategies that delay or reduce the impact of a pandemic may help reduce the spread of disease until a vaccine is available. As you plan, it is important to think about the challenges that you might face, particularly if a pandemic is severe. It may take time to find the answers to these challenges. Below are some situations that could be caused by a severe pandemic and possible ways to address them.

### Social Disruption May Be Widespread

- Plan for the possibility that usual services may be disrupted. These could include services provided by hospitals and other health care facilities, banks, stores, restaurants, government offices, and post offices.
- Prepare back-up plans in case public gatherings, such as volunteer meetings and worship services, are canceled.
- Consider how to care for family members with special needs, in case the services they rely on are not available.

### Being Able to Work May Be Difficult or Impossible

- Find out if you can work from home.
- Ask your employer about how business will continue during a pandemic.
- Plan for the possible reduction or loss of income if you are unable to work or your place of employment is closed.
- Check with your employer or union about leave policies.

## **Schools May Be Closed for an Extended Period of Time**

- Help schools plan for pandemic influenza. Talk to the school nurse or the health center. Talk to your teachers, administrators, and parent-teacher organizations.
- Plan home learning activities and exercises. Have materials, such as books, on hand. Also plan recreational activities that your children can do at home.
- Consider childcare needs.

## **Transportation Services May Be Disrupted**

- Think about how you can rely less on public transportation during a pandemic. For example, store food and other essential supplies so you can make fewer trips to the store.
- Prepare backup plans for taking care of loved ones who are far away.
- Consider other ways to get to work, or, if you can, work at home.

## **People Will Need Advice and Help at Work and Home**

- Meet with friends, parents, community group and make lists of things that you will need to know and what actions can be taken.
- Find volunteers who want to help people in need, such as elderly neighbors, single parents of small children, or people without the resources to get the medical help they will need.
- Identify other information resources in your community, such as mental health hotlines, public health hotlines, or electronic bulletin boards.
- Find support systems—people who are thinking about the same issues you are thinking about. Share ideas.

## **Be Prepared**

Stock a supply of water and food. During a pandemic you may not be able to get to a store. Even if you can get to a store, it may be out of supplies. Public waterworks services may also be interrupted. Stocking supplies can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.

Store foods that:

- Are nonperishable (will keep for a long time) and don't require refrigeration
- Are easy to prepare in case you are unable to cook
- Require little or no water, so you can conserve water for drinking

## **Stay Healthy**

Take common-sense steps to limit the spread of germs. Make good hygiene a habit.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water
- Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in a waste basket
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Stay at home if you are sick

## **It is always a good idea to practice good health habits**

- Eat a balanced diet. Be sure to eat a variety of foods, including plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grain products. Also include low-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish, and beans. Drink lots of water and go easy on salt, sugar, alcohol, and saturated fat.
- Exercise on a regular basis and get plenty of rest.

## **Get Informed**

Knowing the facts is the best preparation. Identify sources you can count on for reliable information. If a pandemic occurs, having accurate and reliable information will be critical.

- Listen to local and national radio, watch news reports on television, and read your newspaper and other sources of printed and Web-based information.
- Talk to your local health care providers and public health officials.

## **The following websites are resources to find additional information on H1N1 Influenza A (swine flu):**

### **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu)

### **Bay County Health Department**

<http://www.baycounty-mi.gov/Health/InfluenzaUpdates.aspx>

### **Bay County Health Department's Automated Information Line**

(989) 895-4192

### **Michigan Department of Community Health**

<http://www.michigan.gov/mdch>