

PANDEMIC PLANNING

Home and Family Preparedness

This fact sheet provides information on how families can prepare themselves for a possible pandemic.

BACKGROUND

A severe pandemic is defined as a worldwide epidemic in a vulnerable population. Communities, individuals, employers, schools, and other organizations can prepare and plan for how to help limit the spread of disease. Pandemic concerns have increased due to the more recent impacts of disease outbreaks such as the SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in 2002, pandemic H1N1 in 2009, MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2012, and novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in 2019. Future disease outbreaks are likely, but difficult to predict.

General Precautions

Observe general precautions, including handwashing.

If one of your family or household members becomes ill, they should be isolated in a separate room. If several members are sick, they can be isolated in the same room. When caring for those who are ill and to prevent the spread of disease, you will need some appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including the following:

- Disposable vinyl, nitrile, or latex gloves or other reusable gloves that can be disinfected
- At least the minimum level of respiratory protection, which is a handmade cloth face mask, surgical mask (if available), or preferably an N95 respirator (if available).

Gloves and face masks must be put on and removed properly to avoid contaminating yourself (see [“How to Use a Face Mask”](#)).

Disinfection

Cups, glasses, dishes, all eating utensils, thermometers, and so on must be disinfected after use by the ill person. The eating utensils can be disinfected by use of either a dishwasher or dishwater with 1.5 tsp. (7.5 mL) of household bleach to one gallon (3.8 liters) of water. Remember that handling these items while they are still contaminated will lead to possible infection. Therefore, wear gloves while handling potentially contaminated items.

Surfaces in the room of the infected persons should be cleaned with a solution of bleach and water as noted

above or with disinfectant spray, wipes, or liquid. Pay attention to faucets, doorknobs, telephones, and refrigerator, oven, and toilet flush handles. This should be done whenever there is contact by an infected person or otherwise 2–3 times a day. Linens and clothing need to be washed in warm water with detergent and preferably dried in a dryer.

Be careful in your personal protective wear and hygiene measures to avoid carrying infected material on your skin or clothing, which may contaminate others or yourself. Designate a specific garbage bag for infected, disposable materials.

Isolation

If you develop flu-like symptoms, stay home and isolated from your household except to seek medical care. Remain at home until at least 24 hours after you are free of fever (100°F [37.8°C] or greater) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Seek medical care if you have signs of pneumonia or severe lung infection (difficulty breathing, wheezing, or a persistent fever over 102°F or 38.9°C).

If there is local transmission of disease, keep your children in your yard or home away from others who may be infected. Plan ahead who you can call upon if you are alone, ill, and incapacitated or if the adults in the household become ill and incapacitated. Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick or what will be needed to care for them in your home.

Schools and day-care facilities will likely close. Plan childcare in advance and how you might work from home. For example, or how college-age family members might assist in childcare when their colleges and universities are closed. Having multiple younger children from several households in one home for day care is unsafe because of the high risk of spreading the disease.

Limit your exposure to public places, which may include grocery shopping only once a week rather than

every few days. In addition to the recommended food and water storage items, keep a supply of your prescription medications, nonprescription drugs, and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, vitamins, rubbing alcohol, thermometers, garbage bags, and cleaning supplies. Keep your car filled with gas, and have cash on hand in case banks are closed or services limited. Use over-the-counter medications as directed on the container.

Maintain social distancing (see “[Pandemic Planning—Social Distancing](#)” fact sheet for more details) and stay at least 6 feet away from others at all times, particularly in public. Additional hygiene measures include:

- Avoid handshaking and other forms of contact.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow and immediately dispose of tissues even if you are not ill (see “[Pandemic Planning—Personal Hygiene](#)” fact sheet for more details).
- Teach your children the proper handwashing and cough/sneeze behaviors.

If you are ill, you need to be isolated from those who are healthy even in your own household.

REFERENCES

www.cdc.gov Interim pre-pandemic planning guidance, including individual planning, workplace planning, community planning, school planning, health-care planning, community strategy for pandemic influenza mitigation.

www.osha.gov Guidance on preparing workplaces for an influenza pandemic.

www.who.int Coronavirus outbreak, avian flu fact sheet, pandemic preparedness plan, guidelines, WHO pandemic influenza draft protocol for rapid response and containment.

www.epa.gov Groundwater and drinking water: emergency disinfection of drinking water.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Basic Self Reliance* (1989), 76.