

## *What can I do to prepare and protect myself and my family?*

Individuals should take appropriate planning and preparation for themselves and their families in case a pandemic influenza occurred in the United States. The following situations may occur in a pandemic:

- **Social disruption may be widespread.** Usual services may be disrupted and you should plan ahead (hospitals, banks, stores, government offices, post offices). Public gatherings may be cancelled (prepare back-up plans for volunteer meetings, worship services, etc). Consider how to care for people with special needs.
- **Being able to work may be difficult or impossible.** See if you can work from home. Check with your employer about their business plan if pandemic influenza occurs. Plan for possible reduction or loss of income if you are unable to work. Check with employer about leave policies.
- **Schools may be closed for an extended period of time.** Talk to your child's school about their plans. Plan home learning activities and exercises. Have materials on hand. Consider childcare needs.
- **Transportation services may be disrupted.** Store food and other essential supplies so you can make fewer trips to the store. Prepare back-up plans for taking care of loved ones who are far away.
- **People will need advice and help at work and home.** Think about what information you may need to work at home, or what information work may need if you are at home.
- **Be prepared.** Stock a supply of food and water (at least a two week supply). Stores may be closed or if open, they may be out of supplies. Store foods that are nonperishable and don't require refrigeration, are easy to prepare in case you are unable to cook, and require little or no water so that you can conserve water for drinking. Have a stocked supply of your pet food/medications. Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes and vitamins. Talk to your health care provider and/or pharmacist about getting a one month emergency supply of prescription medications.
- **Stay healthy.** Take common sense steps to limit the spread of germs. Make good hygiene a habit. Teach good hygiene to your family/children.
  - Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
  - Cover your mouth and nose with 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 cleanser.
  - Stay at home if you are sick.
  - Practice good health habits-eat a balanced diet, drink lots of water, exercise on a regular basis and get plenty of rest.
- For additional information, visit [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)