

Plan to be Prepared

In an emergency, know where to go,
what to do, who to call.



“We interrupt this programming for a test of the Emergency Alert System.

This is only a test.

If this were a real emergency, you would ...”

Take a moment and finish that thought. If faced with an actual emergency that threatened your health or safety, would you know what to do? Does your family have the knowledge or resources to help them respond quickly and appropriately?

Now is your opportunity to answer these questions and prepare your household—so that you will be ready no matter what happens. Having the right supplies on hand can make life easier during a power outage, flood, storm or other emergency. Even though it’s unlikely that you would be unable to leave your home, you should have a reserve supply of food, water and other essentials that will last from three to seven days. Take time now to create a family emergency preparedness plan, then, practice it with your family. Have periodic rehearsals,

including some with the lights out. In an emergency, the electricity may be off.

Make sure everyone in your family knows where you keep your emergency supplies and your first aid kit. Make sure you have a battery-operated radio or TV with extra batteries in case the power goes out. Know which station(s) can provide you with up-to-date local information. Know the best escape route from each room in your home and where family members will meet in case they can’t get home. Know your community’s public alert system and your child’s school emergency plan.

This supplement, sponsored by the New York State Department of Health, will give you lots of useful advice to help keep you and your family safe. Look inside to learn more!

what's inside

National Preparedness Month	2
Message from the State Health Commissioner	3
Don’t get left in the dark	2-3
If you feel overwhelmed	4
Stockpiled supplies available	4
For more information	4



September is National Preparedness Month

Whether it's a widespread power outage, severe weather, health threat or any other emergency, it pays to be prepared. The ability to respond quickly and effectively is crucial to help keep New Yorkers safe. That's why our State is joining with federal officials in observing September as "National Preparedness Month." The lesson for all of us is that while we can't predict when an emergency will happen, we can prepare ourselves and our families to help get through it safely.

That lesson is more important than ever in this post-9/11 era. New York State has been working diligently to identify, prevent and respond to threats to public health and safety and we have made outstanding progress. However, equally important to our excellently trained health and safety professionals are New York's knowledgeable and concerned citizens. What can you do? Be prepared for any type of emergency by planning ahead and taking sensible steps that will help protect you and your family in the event of a natural disaster, widespread illness or terrorism-related event. The information in this supplement can get you started. If you would like to know more, contact your local health department or check the New York State Health Department website at www.nyhealth.gov Do it today—because it's always a good plan to be prepared!

Food for Thought

In case of an emergency, you should have a three to seven day supply of food on hand for each member of your family, but what kinds of food are best and how can you be sure they will be safe to eat when you need them? Use the tips below to help you plan.

- Tailor your supply of food to the type of things your family normally eats. Familiar foods can lift morale and give a feeling of security in times of stress.
- Consider whether there is anyone in your family with special diets or allergies that you need to accommodate.
- Buy foods that need no refrigeration and little or no preparation or cooking.
- Build up your reserves by buying a few extra items a week until you have a supply large enough to feed your family for three to seven days.
- Have extra fuel/charcoal on hand if you own a grill or camp stove. Never use a grill or camp stove inside the house

because dangerous carbon monoxide fumes could build up and cause illness or even death.

- Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator and freezer at all times. This will eliminate the guess work about how cold the unit is and tell you if the food is safe to eat. The refrigerator should be set at 40 degrees or less and the freezer at 0 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep your freezer as full as possible. A full freezer will keep food cold longer and also is more energy efficient.
- If you fear a power outage is likely, turn your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest setting. If the electricity goes off, this will extend the length of time the food will keep without spoiling.
- Buy freeze-pack inserts or fill plastic jugs with water and keep them frozen. Put them in the refrigerator as soon as possible after the power goes off.
- Know where dry and block ice can be purchased.

Helpful Hints

- Keep canned food in a dry, dark area where the temperature is fairly cool — between 32 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit.
- To protect foods from pests and extend their shelf life, store them in tightly closed cans or metal containers. Do not store your reserve food supply in the basement if it is prone to flooding.
- Rotate your reserve food supply. Try to use food by the "best if consumed by" date. If foods don't have a "best if consumed by" date, then mark (in ink) the date you purchased the item. Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in the front.
- Inspect your reserves periodically to make sure there are no broken seals or dented containers.

Other Emergency Preparations

- Keep your electric and natural gas company's emergency number on or near your phone.
- Keep your water company's emergency number on or near your phone.
- Know when and how to safely turn off your electric, gas and water supplies. Have the tools available to turn off these services if it becomes necessary.
- Contact your utility company if anyone in your household uses life-sustaining equipment, such as a kidney dialysis machine or respirator. Your utility company can advise you how to prepare for power outages.
- Have at least one telephone that does not need electricity (wall plug model or cellular). Cordless phones don't work in a power outage.
- Fill your car's gas tank if a heavy storm is predicted.
- Fill your bathtub with water if you are on a well and a heavy storm is predicted. This water can be used for household purposes other than drinking (washing, flushing toilets).
- Make a written record of household possessions for insurance purposes. Record model and serial numbers. Be sure to include expensive furniture items and appliances that are too heavy to carry. Store the list somewhere away from home, such as a safe deposit box.
- Buy flood insurance if you live in an area that is flood-prone.
- Have plywood available to cover windows during a hurricane, especially if you live along the coast.
- Make arrangements for your pets. Most shelters do not allow pets. Prior to an emergency, call your County Emergency Management Office and ask them where you could leave your pet. Have ID, collar, leash and proof of vaccination for all pets. Have current photos of your pets in case they get lost.

Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities

A disaster preparedness plan for a person with a disability should include a personal support network or "self-help team," consisting of family members and friends who know about the individual's special

needs and who are willing to help if disaster strikes. Members of your network may be roommates, relatives, neighbors, friends and co-workers. They should be available during or immediately after the disaster. They should be people that you trust and who care about your safety. They should know your capabilities and needs and be able to make the necessary health and safety arrangements if you are trapped or unable to care for yourself following an emergency. Organize a separate self-help network for your home, school, workplace, volunteer site and any other place where you spend a lot of time.

The American Red Cross guide, **Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities**, recommends incorporating the following into personal support network plans:

- Do not depend on one person. Include a minimum of three people in your network for each location where you regularly spend a lot of time.
- Think about what your needs will be during a disaster. Write them down. Describe your needs in the areas of personal care, personal care equipment, medications (prescription and over-the-counter medicines), adaptive feeding devices, electricity-dependent equipment and transportation. If you have any service animals, such as a seeing-eye dog, include them, as well. Complete a medical information sheet. Wear medical alert tags or bracelets that help identify your disability. Know the name and address of more than one medical facility if you are dependent on any life-sustaining equipment or treatment.
- Give the network members copies of your evacuation plans and relevant emergency documents, too.
- Contact your local emergency information management office. It is listed in the government pages of your local phone book. Many offices maintain a registry of people with disabilities so they can be located and given assistance quickly in a disaster.
- Arrange with members of your network to check on you immediately if local officials give an evacuation order or if a disaster occurs. This is especially important if you are hard-of-hearing or deaf. Agree on how you and your network will communicate during and after an emergency. Your telephone may not be working.

Choose a signal for help that your network will understand, such as knocking on a wall, or using a whistle, bell, or high-pitched noisemaker. Visual signals could include hanging a sheet outside your window.

- Give the members of your network all the necessary keys they may need to get into your house or car.



Message from the State Health Commissioner

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.

As a physician, I know from personal experience that life-altering events can occur with breathtaking speed. A patient may have an unexpected allergic reaction to a medicine. "Routine" surgery turns out to be anything but. A medical emergency can happen at any time.

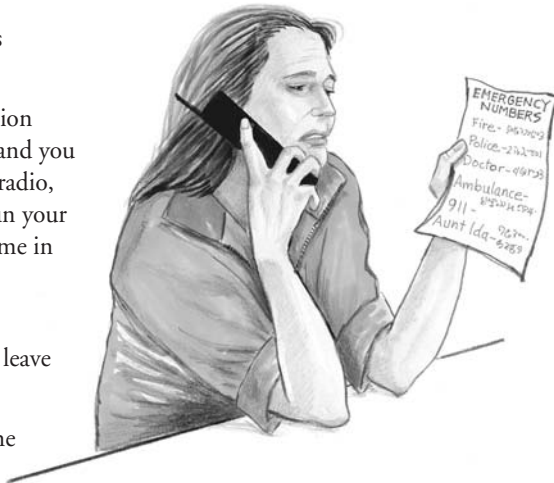
Similarly, as a public health professional, I know that prevention and preparation are crucial to an effective response in an emergency. That's why we have been working closely with our local health departments, hospitals and health care practitioners to be ready for the unexpected, whether it might be widespread flu, a food-borne disease outbreak, or any other public health emergency. Our approach is summed up in the motto we chose for our health preparedness activities: **Aware/Prepare... Knowledge is power.**

Knowledge **is** power. If the electricity has gone off or a storm is raging outside, there are things that you and your family must do to stay safe. Please take the time to read through this supplement and learn more.

Keep on Top of Things!

You'll need to be aware of what is happening in an emergency.

- Listen to the radio for information updates. If the electricity is off and you do not have a battery-powered radio, use your car radio. But never run your car for an extended period of time in an open or closed garage!
- Start thinking about what you would need to do if you had to leave your house:
 - ❖ It's a good idea to have the bulk of your family's disaster supplies packed in an easy-to-carry container and ready to go quickly.
 - ❖ Be sure to bring cash, as well as your ATM or credit card, change for the pay phone, telephone numbers of family



and friends, an extra set of car and house keys, your driver license or other photo ID, and valuable personal papers that cannot be easily replaced.



On the Road...

If you leave home because of a flood, do not drive around barricades. They are there for your safety. If your car stalls in rapidly rising water, abandon it immediately and climb to higher

ground. If you evacuate your home due to a storm, let someone know your destination, your route and when you expect to arrive.

Plan to Be Prepared!

Use the checklists below to help you prepare a reserve food and supply list for your family in case of an emergency.

Food and Water

- Bottled water – two gallons per person per day
- Ready-to-eat canned foods – vegetables, fruit, beans, meat, fish, poultry, pasta, soup, juice
- Milk – powdered, canned or shelf-stable brick pack
- High energy foods – peanut butter, jelly, nuts, dried meat (for example, jerky), granola, trail mix
- Cereal and snacks – cookies, crackers
- Staples – sugar, salt, pepper, instant coffee, tea bags, cocoa
- Candy – chocolate bars, hard candy
- Infant and small children's needs – baby food, formula, disposable diapers
- Specialty food – for elderly or people on special diets
- Pet food (if needed)

Health and Hygiene Supplies

- Prescription medication
- First aid kit and bandages, gauze pads, antiseptic, pain killers, tweezers, scissors
- Toilet paper
- Premoistened hand wipes – premoistened towelettes or baby wipes
- Disinfectant no-rinse hand soap
- Toiletries – toothpaste, deodorant
- Feminine hygiene supplies

Household Supplies and Equipment

- One gallon liquid chlorine bleach – unscented with no soaps or additives
- Battery-powered radio
- Flashlights – one in each room of the house
- Extra fresh batteries for both radio and flashlights
- Gasoline (if you plan to use a generator)
- Propane fuel (if you plan to use a grill or camp stove)
- Charcoal (if you plan to use a barbecue grill)
- Disposable tableware, including paper towels and napkins
- Manual can opener
- Plastic bags – zip sealing, garbage
- Cash/travelers checks
- Fire extinguisher (small canister "ABC" type)
- Food product thermometer – able to measure temperature from 0 to 220 degrees Fahrenheit.

Tools

- Rope (for rescue, tow, tying down property)
- Shovel
- Hammer and nails
- Utility knife
- Work gloves
- Duct tape
- Electrical tape
- Clean-up Supplies
- Broom
- Buckets
- Disinfecting spray
- Dust masks
- Mop
- Paper towels
- Rags (to clean with)
- Rubber gloves
- Scrub brush
- Sponges
- Trash bags

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

New York State Department of Health www.nyhealth.gov
New York State Office of Homeland Security www.state.ny.us/security
New York State Emergency Management Office www.nysemo.state.ny.us
American Red Cross www.redcross.org

Stockpiled Supplies Available in Health Emergencies

Did you ever wonder what would happen if an exotic illness like SARS or a new strain of flu arrived unexpectedly in New York and started making hundreds of people sick? New York officials, along with their federal and local counterparts, have been working together to be ready to provide mass immunizations or mass medications, should it ever become necessary.

At the Governor's request, the federal Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) could arrive in New York State within 12 hours. The SNS is a national repository of antibiotics, chemical antidotes, antitoxins, life-support medications, IV administration, airway maintenance supplies, and medical/surgical items. It is designed to supplement and re-supply state and local public health agencies in the event of a serious public health threat.

Every county in New York State has identified various places where antibiotics, vaccines and other medical supplies could be quickly distributed, if needed, to help prevent illness. In an emergency, these sites would be announced on radio and TV.

If you are directed to go to a public health emergency medication pick up site, you should have the following with you:

- Photo identification
- Your address and emergency contact phone number
- Names and ages of all household members
- Weights of all persons in your household under 100 pounds
- Medication allergies of all persons
- Known medical conditions, including
 - Liver problems
 - Kidney problems
 - Epilepsy
 - Heart condition
 - Immuno-compromised
 - Skin condition
 - Pregnancy or breastfeeding

Write down this information now, and update it often, so you will have it if needed.

Your Local Health Department—Making your Community Healthier

Whether helping someone bitten by a rabid animal, investigating an outbreak of foodborne disease, providing education about West Nile Virus, or giving flu shots, your local health department is a valuable resource. Every county in New York State, as well as New York City, has a local health department which is working to reduce illness, promote wellness and prepare for, and respond to public health emergencies.

To find out how to contact your local health department, visit the State Health Department's website at: <http://www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/llu/map.htm> or check the government pages of your local telephone directory.

Keep the telephone number somewhere you will be sure to find it.

If You Feel Overwhelmed

Prolonged or negative stress, that could occur in natural or manmade emergencies, can take an especially heavy toll on your physical well-being. Stress affects the body in a variety of ways. In extreme stress, such as fear, we experience many different physical reactions, ranging from increased adrenaline and blood pressure to dilated pupils. These are important defense mechanisms for our bodies but they can also be very harmful if stress continues for too long.

Persons who feel extreme anxiety and stress often experience symptoms such as: back pain; muscle tension; headaches; hand tremors; diarrhea; constipation; pounding heart; chest pains; shortness of breath; a burning sensation in the chest; feeling faint and dizzy; a lingering head cold; ringing in the ears; teeth grinding; hives or skin rashes; indigestion or gas pains; loss of appetite; nausea; vomiting and stomach pain. These symptoms may also relate to a physical disorder. If the symptoms appear suddenly, are severe or persist, see your health care provider.

Because individuals have varying responses to trauma, as an extension of its previous "Project Liberty" effort, the State

Office of Mental Health is referring anyone who now desires crisis counseling services to LIFENET, a 24-hour mental health information and referral line. LIFENET operators provide free, confidential crisis referral and information services. Round-the-clock referral specialists will listen to your problems, assess your needs and get you assistance quickly.

LIFENET assistance is available in multiple languages and to individuals who are deaf or who have hearing impairments. LIFENET can be reached at:

For English Speakers 1-800-LIFENET
1-800-543-3638
For Spanish Speakers 1877-AYUDESE
1-877-298-3373
For Chinese and Korean Speakers
1-877-990-8585
For People with Hearing Impairments
(TTY) 1-212-982-5284
For Other Languages 1-800-LIFENET
Ask for an interpreter

For more information about where to find counseling services, visit <http://www.projectliberty.state.ny.us>

Preparedness at Work

Since many people spend most of their day at their job, it makes sense to be prepared if an emergency happens while you are at work. Decide in advance how you will deal with your personal or medical needs if you must remain where you are due to an emergency (shelter-in-place). Plan how your family will be taken care of if you can't get home. Will they know what to do if they cannot communicate with you?

It's also important to know exactly what would happen in your workplace during an emergency. Many workplaces already have emergency plans. Know the plan, and how it affects you. Practice the plan during drills, so you will know how to get out of your building quickly. Also, be sure to tell your employer if you need help walking down the stairs or require some other assistance. The following checklist can help you plan:

- Know where there are safe places (e.g., in the stairwells, under heavy tables or desks; rooms away from windows) and dangerous places (e.g., near windows; heavy furniture and equipment that may get knocked over).
- Know the locations of fire extinguishers, first aid supplies, and fire alarms in your office; post emergency numbers in a location that is visible and accessible.
- Know your floor wardens. If you will need assistance of any kind, let them know now, before an emergency occurs.
- Know several evacuation routes from your work area.
- Assemble a workplace emergency kit and keep it handy. Consider including: sensible shoes; warm jacket; high energy snacks; foil water pouches or bottled water; flashlight with fresh batteries; working AM/FM portable radio; and a first aid kit. If you are taking prescription medicine or use durable medical equipment, be sure you have backup supplies.