

This fact sheet provides information on how to prepare for “Sheltering-In-Place” in the event of a possible pandemic.

Background

A severe pandemic (defined as a world-wide epidemic) in a vulnerable population, such as the 1918 flu pandemic, represents a worst-case scenario for pandemic planning and preparedness. Communities, individuals, employers, schools, and other organizations are being asked to plan for the use of interventions that will help limit the spread of disease. Pandemic concerns escalated due to spread of avian influenza (H5N1) virus among animals in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe, which has the potential to threaten human health. In 2009 a pandemic occurred from a new influenza virus called H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on). This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide. Health experts are predicting that we will see a continuation of the spread of the H1N1 influenza virus.

Depending on the severity of a pandemic, commercial airlines might drastically curtail or even cease operations. Travel restrictions could also impede people from returning to their home country or fleeing to other countries. For these reasons, it may make more sense to “**shelter-in-place**” (i.e., stay home and practice “social distancing” to avoid infection) for an appropriate period of time.

Preparation

Families should prepare at least two weeks of emergency supplies (food, water, medicines, etc.) in order to shelter-in-place during a pandemic. Consult *Preparation for Home Emergencies and Natural Disasters* under *Provident Living* at www.lds.org.

Living Internationally

Those living in areas with undependable infrastructure for water, electricity, and food availability should evaluate their situation and prepare emergency supplies accordingly (non-perishable food, potable water, medicines, etc.) for the possibility of sheltering-in-place for at least two and up to twelve weeks. Water purification techniques for drinking water such as boiling, filtering and/or adding chlorine to locally available rainwater, lakes, rivers and wells may replace the need to store large quantities of water. Boiling water will kill most types of disease-causing organisms and is the most reliable method of purifying water easily. Bring the water to a rolling boil for two minutes. Add one minute for each 5000 feet of elevation. The addition of chlorine bleach to water is also a viable alternative. For clear water, add 8 drops per gallon (3.8 liters) and let stand for at least 15 minutes. If the water is cloudy, add twice as much bleach. Bleach used for water purification should be unscented and have a concentration of sodium hypochlorite of at least 4%.

What can you do on a daily basis?

Cover your cough. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to kill viruses and bacteria or apply a hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol content when soap and water is not available (see *Pandemic Planning-Personal Hygiene Fact Sheet* for more details). Stay home if you are sick. Get a vaccination against seasonal flu.

Travel

Those living in or traveling to countries with the potential of pandemic disease should consider the potential risks. Keep informed of the latest medical guidance and practical information and plan accordingly. Consult www.travel.state.gov for the latest tips on international travel.

Sheltering of Missionaries

Missionaries serving in the local areas may require assistance if required to shelter-in-place for more than several days. Please contact the local Mission President for instructions and assistance if requested to provide these services.

References cited:

Information for this fact sheet was taken from U.S. Department of State (http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_3096.html), www.pandemicflu.gov, also the World Health Organization (www.who.int/en/) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) websites.