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 worldwide 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 asked to prepare and plan for the use of interventions that will help limit the spread of disease. Pandemic concerns have escalated 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 for scientists to predict.

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” (that is, 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, and so forth) in order to shelter-in-place during a pandemic. Consult “Emergency Preparedness” at ProvidentLiving.ChurchofJesusChrist.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 (nonperishable food, potable water, medicines, and so forth) for the possibility of sheltering-in-place for at least 2 and up to 12 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 5,000 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 the “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
Information for this fact sheet was taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (https://emergency.cdc.gov/shelterinplace.asp) and World Health Organization (www.who.int/en/) websites.

For more information about this topic, call the Risk Management Division:
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