

PANDEMIC PLANNING

Sheltering-in-Place

This fact sheet provides information on how to prepare for “sheltering-in-place” in the event of 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.

Depending on the severity of a pandemic, commercial air travel might be drastically reduced or even stop completely. Travel restrictions could also prevent 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 water, electricity, and food should evaluate their situation and prepare emergency supplies (nonperishable food, clean water, medicines, and so forth) for the possibility of sheltering-in-place for at least 2–12 weeks.

Water Purification Guidelines

Water purification techniques for drinking water, such as boiling, filtering, and/or adding chlorine to 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. To do this:

- 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 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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- 1-800-453-3860, ext. 2-4049 (toll free in the United States and Canada)

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