

# Health and Medical Preparedness

**T**here are many ways to protect you and your family from health related illnesses and medical emergencies.

## General Preparedness

- † Make sure all vaccinations are up-to-date.
- † Schedule an annual physical with your doctor.
- † Practice healthy living and healthy habits.
- † Train one person in your home in CPR and First Aid.
- † Wash your hands often for at least for 15 to 20 seconds with soap and warm water.
- † Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw it away immediately. If a tissue is not handy, cover your mouth with your hands and wash hands.
- † Carry sanitation wipes and gels to assist with safe sanitation practices.
- † Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose after coming in contact with others (shaking hands, for example) and public or community devices, such as door handles, public water fountains, etc.
- † Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
- † When sick, stay home if possible to help prevent illnesses and germs from spreading to others. Notify your family physician or go to a doctor immediately. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcoholic beverages and get plenty of rest. Finish all prescribed medication, even if you feel better.
- † Be alert to any rashes, bumps or hives.
- † When in doubt or if the illness or rash persists for more than 5 to 7 days, seek professional care.
- † Special actions regarding insect borne illnesses:
  - Apply insect repellent sparingly
  - Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

## Recognizing an Emergency

You can encounter an emergency anytime and any place. You may:

- † **Hear** shouts, moans, screams, clashing metal and breaking glass
- † **See** a crowd, an accident, downed utility lines, flooding, or a chemical spill
- † **Smell** smoke or strong odors
- † **Observe** unusual behavior, slurred speech, confusion, complaints of respiratory problems

If you encounter any of the above-mentioned situations:

- † **CHECK** the scene to be sure it's safe to help
  - Be careful, you won't be much help if you get injured.
  - Check the victim for consciousness.
- † **CALL** 9-1-1.
  - Ask someone else to call if you're helping.
  - Give your location and the victim's condition.
  - Don't hang up until the dispatcher says you can.
- † **CARE** for the victim
  - Check breathing, pulse and bleeding.
  - Help those with life-threatening emergencies first.
  - Don't move anyone injured unless in danger.
  - Help them rest comfortably.

- Keep them warm or cool as needed.
- Offer reassurance.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Influenza (Flu):** a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.

**Common symptoms include:**

- High fever
- Headache
- Extreme fatigue
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny and/or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Diarrhea

**Common means of infection:** person to person through cough and sneezes or by touching an object infected by someone with the flu and then touching your own mouth or nose (before washing your hands).

**Lyme disease:** caused by a bacterial infection that is spread by ticks. Can occur at any age and is most common among young children and those who reside or work in wooded areas.

**Common symptoms include:**

- An expanding skin rash
- Flu like symptoms
- 90% of people develop a circular, bulls-eye rash

**Common means of infection:** occurs when individual is bitten by a Lyme-infected tick

**West Nile Virus:** a flavivirus that can infect humans, birds, mosquitoes, horses and some other mammals.

**Common symptoms include:**

- Flu like symptoms

**Common means of infection:** transmitted through a bite from a West Nile-infected mosquito

**Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS):** viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus, called SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV). First reported in Asia in Feb. 03, spread to more than 24 countries over several months before being contained.

**Common symptoms include:**

- Flu like symptoms
- Mild respiratory symptoms
- Pneumonia

**Common means of infection:** person to person through cough and sneezes or by touching an object infected by someone with the flu and then touching your own mouth or nose (before washing your hands). It is also possible for SARS to spread by air or other ways.