



**Emergency
Management Program
Monthly Disaster Tip
April
Public Health
Emergencies**

Public Health Emergencies may be related to outbreaks of infectious diseases (such as pandemic flu and West Nile virus), food and waterborne illnesses, and other threats to the public's health and safety. Man-made attacks can also create public health emergencies. Pandemic flu is still of concern and health experts recommend the following to prevent the spread of flu: wash your hands with soap and water frequently; cover your mouth whenever you cough and sneeze; stay home and away from others if you are sick. Get flu shots when available. This month and May several public safety agencies will hold drills to train on such events within Shelby County. The agencies include Memphis/Shelby County Health Department and EMA, Law Enforcement agencies, Fire Departments, Emergency Medical Services, and hospitals. A pandemic occurs when a disease spreads causing illness around the world—a global disease outbreak. While many diseases can become a pandemic, influenza (flu) is of special concern because it easily spreads and is constantly changing. And because flu occurs in many animals besides humans, this also increases the chances of it changing and becoming a pandemic. Three Pandemics have occurred during the last century: in 1918, 1957, and 1968.

- Many of the simple steps to prepare for a flu pandemic also impact things you should do for a wide range of other emergencies, these include:
 1. **Talk to your family members.** It is important to think about the health issues that could affect you and your family during a pandemic or other Public Health emergency. Consider what you will need during to care for you and your loved ones in your home for an extended period.
 2. **Store food and water.** During a pandemic, you and your family may not be able to get to a store, so it is important to have water and food items that won't spoil on hand. (canned, freeze dried, and powder products)
 3. **Create a medical supply kit and a family emergency health information sheet.** Include prescription medications, pain relievers, stomach remedies, and first aid materials. List the important medical information that you might need for all of your family, such as: serious health conditions, allergies, and medications that are taken daily.
 4. **Stay informed.** The following are sites where you can learn more about flu and how to stay healthy.

www.pandemicflu.gov (U.S. Department of health and Human Services)
www.cdc.gov/flu (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Health Tip: Get the shot! Prevent the flu! While pandemic flu is of great concern, seasonal flu causes a great deal of illnesses and death every year. The flu shot is the best way to keep from getting the flu. While the flu shot is especially important for the elderly and infants, anyone wishing to get the shot should do so on an annual basis. Keep hand sanitizer at home, work, and in your car for when you come into contact with possible flu environments.

Disaster tip information provided by the Emergency Survival Program-(ESP)