

# HOME CARE GUIDE...

## Providing Care At Home During Pandemic Flu



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

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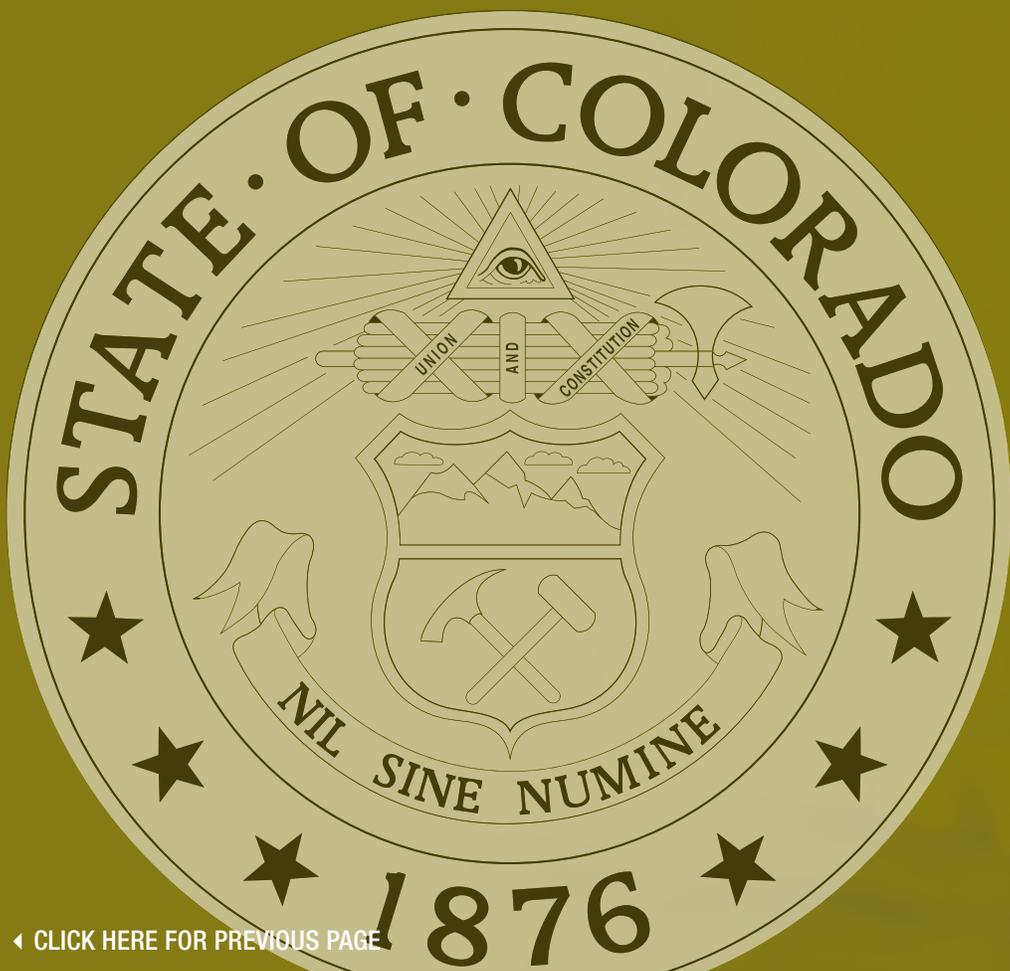
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# Introduction

## About Pandemic Flu

A pandemic is a disease that spreads all over the world in a short period of time, infecting a large number of people. Pandemic flu, or pandemic influenza, is a worldwide outbreak of a new flu virus for which there is little or no immunity (protection) in the human population.

A pandemic will be different than other emergencies we have faced before – it will last longer, make more people seriously ill and may cause more deaths than any other health crisis in our time.

While we cannot stop a pandemic from happening, we can plan ahead. As many as one in four people could get sick during a pandemic. Many of these people could become seriously ill. Because so many people will be sick, the services and supplies that we count on every day may not be readily available. That means each individual and family should have at least two-weeks of emergency supplies, like non-perishable food, water, and medicines on hand to take care of their loved ones at home.

## Home Preparation is Important

Since so many people will be sick during a pandemic, it is likely that families will need to take care of their loved ones at home. Hospitals and other healthcare services may only be able to help people with the most severe illnesses. There may also be fewer healthcare workers available to provide care. When caring for an

adult or child who is sick during a pandemic, it will be very important to be prepared.

- You need to have the right supplies and medicines on hand.
- You need to know how to care for a sick family or household member, including how to treat their symptoms and when to call for medical advice.
- You will also need to know how to control the spread of the disease in your own home and reduce the risk of illness among other family members or caretakers.

Please remember, most people will survive the pandemic flu. But it is important to be prepared so that you give the best care to your family and household members who may get sick during a pandemic. The information provided in the following pages will help you prepare so that you will be better able to care for your loved ones at home.

## AN IMPORTANT NOTE

During a pandemic, public health officials and other first responders may recommend that people stay at home, or “isolate” themselves, for a period of time depending on the severity of the disease. Public health officials may also temporarily cancel public events and facilities, such as sporting events, movie theatres and schools. People who are sick may be asked to stay at home for at least five days and possibly for as long as 14 days. If and when a pandemic occurs, this recommendation may change. It will be important for you to stay informed, read and listen to the news, and check your local public health department’s Web site or the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Web site at [www.cdphe.state.co.us](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us) for important instructions during a pandemic.



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# PREPARING YOUR HOME

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## Preparing Your Home

Most people sick with pandemic flu will be cared for at home by another person who lives in the same household. This section gives you information about flu symptoms and how to set up your home to care for someone who is ill.

### About Flu Symptoms

It's important to watch for the first signs of influenza in a family or household member because the sooner you start caring for the sick person, the better. And once the first signs of influenza appear, you can take the actions you need to control the spread of disease in your own home.

The following are symptoms of the flu. These symptoms may develop very quickly and without much warning.

- Sudden fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
- Chills
- Muscle aches or pain
- Headache
- Feeling of weakness and/or exhaustion
- Cough or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Signs of dehydration such as decreased urine, dry mouth and eyes, dizziness, etc.
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain are not typical flu symptoms in adults, but may occur in children

## What to Do for Someone with Influenza

When a person is sick with influenza, they should get plenty of rest and drink plenty of liquids. Monitoring flu symptoms and giving flu medications regularly can help to lessen their flu symptoms. A person with flu may be able to spread illness one day before symptoms start and for **five to 14 days** after becoming sick.

## People with Chronic Diseases or Conditions

People sick with influenza who also have chronic diseases or conditions are at risk for medical complications, such as breathing difficulties. Chronic diseases and conditions include asthma, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, immuno-compromising conditions, kidney problems, such as renal failure, and severe neuromuscular disease.

It is important to monitor a sick adult or child with a chronic disease or condition very closely during a pandemic. While medical complications are most common in people with chronic diseases or conditions, anyone who is sick with influenza can become seriously ill.

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During a pandemic, it may be difficult to maintain frequent contact with your regular healthcare provider(s) as there may not be enough healthcare workers to treat everyone. If you or a loved one has a chronic disease, is pregnant, or has other healthcare conditions requiring medical attention, know where to find important information and where you can go to receive medical attention in the event of an emergency.

You can find information at:

[www.cdphe.state.co.us](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us)

Follow CDPHE on Twitter: [twitter.com/COhealth](https://twitter.com/COhealth)

Join the COHealth Google Group: [groups.google.com/group/cohealth](https://groups.google.com/group/cohealth)

## **Isolating a Sick Person at Home**

When an adult or child is sick and has an infection that can spread to others, such as pandemic flu, that person should be isolated from others. A person who is advised to remain in isolation will be asked to stay at home or in the hospital, separating the ill person from others who are not sick.

Pandemic influenza can be spread by being near someone with the illness who is coughing or sneezing. It can also spread when you touch surfaces that the sick person has touched. Because it can be easily spread, it is important to separate, or isolate, the sick person from people who are not sick.

By separating the sick person in your home, and following these guidelines, you can help limit the spread of pandemic influenza in your home.

- Isolate the sick person(s) within your home. This means choosing a room in your home where the sick person or persons can stay for the entire time that they are sick. Rooms should have windows that open to circulate air, as well as natural sunlight and a door that shuts. The door should stay closed. If possible, this room would have a bathroom that is attached or nearby. It is best if those who are not sick use a separate bathroom.
- Make one person in the household the main caregiver. The main caregiver is the only person who should enter the sick person's room. The caregiver should bring the sick person meals, drinks, and medicines and should closely watch the sick person's symptoms.
  - Other household members should have no contact, or very limited contact, with the sick person.
  - Do not have visitors while the person is sick.
  - Call a medical provider if the sick person's symptoms change or get worse. See *Calling for Medical Advice on page 29* for more information about when to call your medical provider.

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- Wear a surgical or protective mask and disposable gloves when you are in the sick person's room. You will likely need to use two or more masks per day, depending on how often you need to change the mask. This is really important when you are in contact with the sick person or cleaning up body fluids of the sick person. The main caregiver, or anyone else who cannot avoid contact with the sick person, should wear a mask and gloves. Masks should have ear loops or ties for a secure fit. Surgical masks can be purchased at your local pharmacy, hardware store, or at the health care section of your local grocery or discount store.
  - The sick person should also wear a surgical or protective mask. If possible, the sick person should wear a mask anytime the caregiver (or any well person) comes into the room.
  - Change and throw away masks and gloves. You must change and throw away masks when they become moist. You should throw away gloves after each use. After you've used these items, put them into a plastic bag, tie or knot the bag, and throw the bag away in a wastebasket or garbage can.

- Wash your hands before and after contact with sick persons, after removing and disposing of masks or gloves, after using the bathroom and after touching dirty surfaces. Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth without first washing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Always wash with soap and warm water. Hand washing with warm water and soap is preferred over hand sanitizer use; but in situations where hand washing facilities are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer like Purel®.
1. Wet hands with warm water, running water and apply liquid soap
  2. Rub hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces and fingers with soap
  3. Scrub nails by rubbing them against the palms of your hands
  4. Rinse your hands with water
  5. Dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel and use the towel to turn off the faucet

- Sick persons should not leave their room during the time they can spread pandemic flu. This period of isolation is likely to last at least five days after developing symptoms and may last up to 14 days.
  - If you have to take the sick person out of the home, for example for medical appointments, the sick person should wear a mask and cover his or her mouth and nose with tissues when coughing or sneezing. Try to keep the sick person at least six feet away from others (non-caregivers).
  - Always make sure the sick person washes their hands after coughing or sneezing, touching dirty tissues, or after removing their mask.
  - Sick people should cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or their arm when sneezing or coughing.
- Tissues used by the sick person should be placed in a plastic bag. The bag should be tied or knotted and thrown away with other household garbage.
- Do not share personal items with the sick person. These items include eating utensils, cups, computers, phones, pens, clothes, towels, blankets, and bed sheets.



- Clean and disinfect surfaces. On a daily basis, clean surfaces and things that are used often or touched, such as door knobs and handles, light switches, microwaves, phones, remote controls, toilet seats and handles, faucets, toys and other surfaces that are commonly touched around the home or workplace. Use a labeled household disinfectant or a chlorine bleach mixture. For another option, see *Making Your Own Sanitizing Solutions on page 13*.
- Get fresh air into the room. Fresh air can help cut down the amount of germs in the room. When possible, open windows to bring in fresh air several times a day for 10 to 15 minutes each time. This should be done in all rooms of the house, especially in the room where the sick person is placed.
- Wash dishes and eating utensils with warm water and dish soap. It is not necessary to separate dishes and eating utensils between sick and healthy persons as long as they are washed thoroughly with warm to hot water and detergent or dish soap. Everyone's dishes can be washed together by hand with warm water and dish soap, or in a standard dishwasher. Just make sure the dishes and eating utensils are clean! If you don't have hot water or soap, see *Making Your Own Sanitizing Solutions on page 13*.

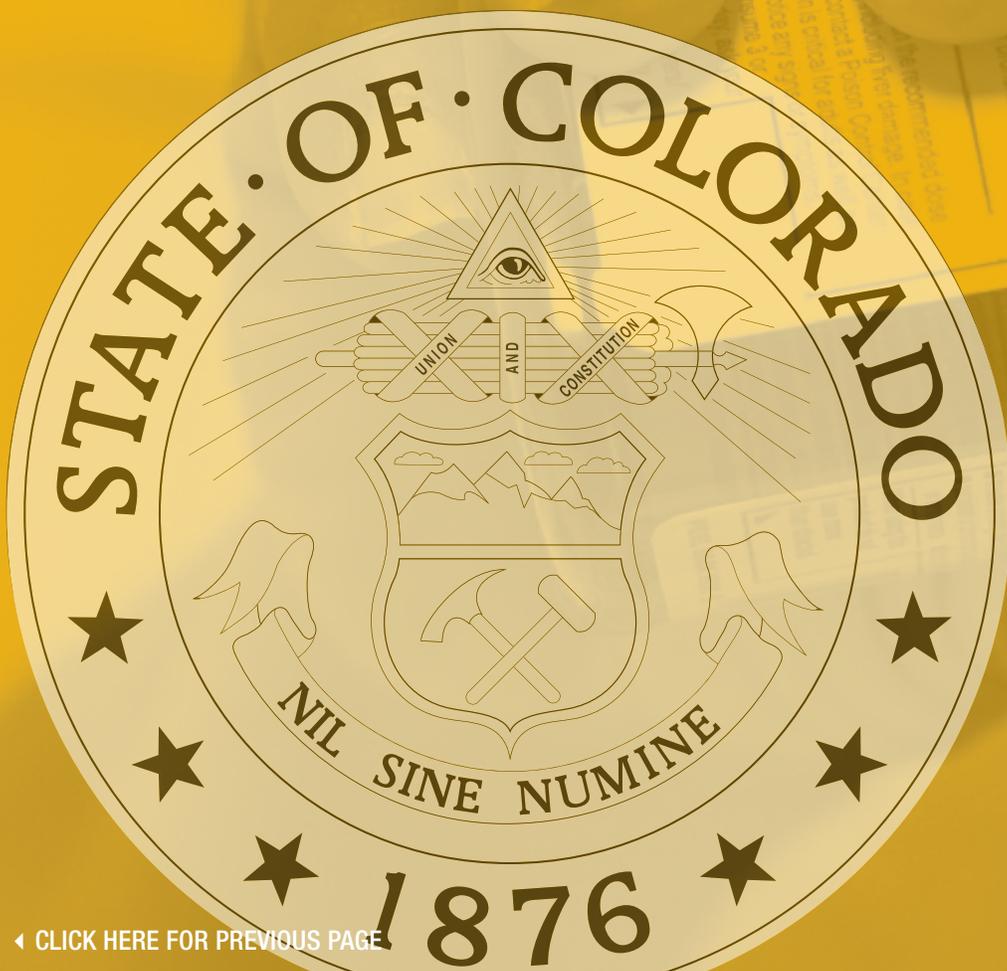
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- Wash laundry with detergent and warm water. Everyone's clothes can be washed together, but you need to handle dirty laundry carefully so that you are not spreading the illness. Gloves can be used to handle dirty laundry. Do not "hug" the laundry to yourself when picking up or moving dirty laundry. Make sure to wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.
  - Once the sick person has gotten better, they will have immunity from getting sick from pandemic flu again.

## MAKING YOUR OWN SANITIZING SOLUTIONS

If you do not have store-bought disinfectants on hand, you can make your own sanitizing solutions with clean water and bleach. Bleach solutions should be made daily or every other day, as the chlorine in the solution dissipates over time.

**Sanitizing solution for general cleaning and disinfecting:** Use 1 teaspoon of household bleach per gallon of water.

**Rinsing solution for washing dishes in cold water:** Use 1 tablespoon of unscented household bleach per gallon of water.



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## Providing Care at Home

Caregivers should learn some basic healthcare skills in order to care for household members that become sick with pandemic flu. This section gives the caregiver information about how to take a temperature, how to treat and reduce fevers, how to look for signs of dehydration, and how to rehydrate a sick household member, as well as information about when to call for medical advice.

During the initial stages of a pandemic, a vaccine may not be available, or vaccine supplies may be limited. Antivirals may be available in limited quantities, however, these medicines may not be effective against a new pandemic flu strain. Consult with healthcare providers to determine whether a pandemic influenza vaccine, if available, or antiviral medicine should be considered.

## About Fever

Fever is a common symptom of the flu. A fever is the body's normal response to fighting the bacteria and viruses that cause infections. The body's temperature is elevated while the fever fights the illness. That is why a mild fever (102°F degrees or less) should not be treated with medication unless the sick person is uncomfortable. It is important to let the body fight off the illness. A fever does not need to be treated unless it reaches the level known as hyperpyrexia which would be at 104°F or above. Most people want to treat a low fever for comfort. The important thing with any fever is to stay well hydrated.

The body's average temperature is 98.6° F, but it can change during the day. A mild rise in temperature to between 100.4° F and 101.3°F can be caused by exercise, excessive clothing, a hot bath or hot weather. Warm food or drink can also raise measured body temperature.

You can expect most flu fevers to normally last between two or three days, occasionally up to 5 days. For adults, the normal range for fever is between 101°F and 104°F. Fevers can go even higher in children, up to 106°F.

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## Taking a Temperature

Getting an accurate temperature can take some practice. Of the various methods you can use, rectal temperatures are the most accurate. Oral temperatures (in the mouth) are also accurate if they are done properly. Ear temperatures can vary in accuracy due to things such as ear wax or the technique used in taking an ear temperature. Taking a temperature at the armpit is the least accurate. For a child younger than five years old, a rectal temperature is best. For anyone older than five years old, it's usually best to take his or her temperature by mouth.

### **There are generally two kinds of thermometers.**

- *Digital Thermometer*

A digital thermometer records temperatures with a heat sensor and runs on a button battery. Digital thermometers can measure a temperature quickly, usually less than 30 seconds. The temperature is displayed in numbers on the screen.

- *Glass Thermometer*

With a glass thermometer, you must shake it until the mercury line is below 98.6° F (37° C). To read a glass thermometer, find where the mercury line ends by turning the thermometer until you can see the mercury line.

## The following information will help you take a correct temperature.

- *Taking Rectal Temperatures (children age 5 and under)*

Have the child lie down on your lap with stomach down. Apply some petroleum jelly to the end of the thermometer and to the opening of the anus. Then insert thermometer into the rectum about one inch, but do not force it in. Hold the child still while the thermometer is in and leave the thermometer in the child's rectum for two minutes (or until a digital thermometer signals that it has an accurate reading). If the rectal temperature is over 100.4° F (38.0° C), the child has a fever.
- *Taking Oral Temperatures (children over age 5 and adults)*

Make sure the sick person has not had a drink - cold or hot - within the last 10 minutes. Place the tip of the thermometer under the tongue. Ask the sick person to hold the thermometer in place with lips and fingers (not teeth) and breathe through the nose, keeping the mouth closed. Leave the thermometer inside the mouth for three minutes (or until a digital thermometer signals that it has an accurate reading). If the mouth cannot close because of a stuffy nose, clean the nose out before taking the temperature.

If the oral temperature is over 99.5° F (37.5° C), the person has a fever.

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- *Taking Oral Temperatures with a Digital Electronic Pacifier Thermometer (infants and toddlers)*

With a pacifier thermometer, have the child suck on the pacifier until it reaches a steady state and you hear a beep. This usually takes three to four minutes.

If the temperature is over 100°F (37.8°), the child has a fever.

- *Taking Ear Temperatures*

If a sick child has been outdoors on a cold day, make sure he/she has been inside for at least 15 minutes before taking the temperature. Pull the ear backward to straighten the ear canal. Place the end of the ear thermometer into the ear canal and aim the probe toward the eye on the opposite side of the head. Then press the button. In about two seconds you can read the temperature on the digital display.

If the temperature is over 100.4°F (38°C), the child has a fever.

## **Treating and Reducing a Fever**

The best way to treat and reduce a fever is to give the sick adult or child extra liquids, remove extra clothing and give fever-reducing medicines.

- *Drink Lots of Liquids*

Encourage the sick person to drink extra liquids. Popsicles, iced drinks and ice cubes are also helpful. Body fluids are lost during fevers because of sweating. By drinking extra liquids you can replace the lost body fluids.

- *Remove Extra Clothing*

Do not bundle up a person with a fever because it may cause them to have a higher fever. Clothing should be kept to a minimum to allow heat to be lost through the skin. If the sick adult or child feels cold or is shivering (the chills), provide a blanket to make them comfortable.

- *Use Fever-Reducing Medicines*

Medicines such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen work well for reducing a fever. It is better to use these medicines only if the sick person feels bad or if the fever is very high and preventing the sick person from taking liquids.

- Do not give aspirin to any child under 21 years of age. It can cause Reye syndrome, which is a very serious illness affecting the liver and the brain.
- Children and infants can be given an over-the-counter fever medicine containing either acetaminophen or ibuprofen. These medicines are available in both liquid and chewable forms. Follow the dosage guidelines listed on the bottle.

- For liquid medicines, use the measuring cap that comes with the bottle to be sure that you are giving the right dose. Do not use the measuring cap with other products. It is important to follow the bottle instructions and not give these medicines more often than the instructions recommend.
  - If you are already using a fever-reducing medication, be sure that you are not combining it with other medicines such as over-the-counter cold and flu medicines that also contain acetaminophen or ibuprofen in the active ingredients. Giving fever-reducing medicines twice can cause poisoning. You can alternate acetaminophen and ibuprofen every 2-4 hours to lower a fever for comfort.
  - Two hours after a sick adult or child has been given these drugs, the fever is usually reduced 2° to 3°F (1° to 1.5° C).
  - You will need to continue giving the medicine while the child still has a fever. Stop giving fever medicines once the fever is over.
- *Sponge Bath*

A sponge bath in lukewarm water can help a sick person feel better, but it does not help reduce fever. It is important to first give the sick adult or child a fever-reducing medicine and wait at least 30 minutes to give the medicine a chance to start working before bathing.

To give a sponge bath, fill a bathtub or basin with about two inches of lukewarm water – between 85° to 90°F (29° to 32°C) - and wet the sick person’s skin with a sponge or washcloth. Do not add ice, ice water or rubbing alcohol to the water because these things do not help reduce fevers and can make the person ill.

Remember, the fever needs to run its course to help the body fight the infection. Please see *Calling for Medical Advice on page 29* for instructions about when to call for medical advice.

## About Dehydration

Dehydration is a common flu symptom and happens when the body loses too much water and the water is not replaced quickly enough. Body fluids are lost during fevers because of sweating and fast breathing. It is important that anyone who is sick drink lots of liquids to help them fight or recover from the flu.

Give an adult or child who is sick plenty of liquids to drink such as water. This will help them avoid getting dehydrated. If the sick adult or child has mild diarrhea or is vomiting, give them liquids with electrolytes (to replace the loss of salt and sugar in the body) such as sports drinks like Gatorade®, or Pedialyte® for children.

If the sick adult or child has not urinated in more than 12 hours (six hours for infants) and has symptoms such as a dry mouth, dry eyes or little or no tears, and has an overall sick appearance, you should call for medical advice.

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Signs of dehydration include:

- Little or no urine
- Dark and concentrated urine
- Dry mouth with decreased saliva
- Dry eyes with little or no tear production
- Sunken eyes
- Weakness
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Loss of skin elasticity (doughy or loose skin)
- Dizziness when the sick adult or child stands or sits up
- Fainting

## Giving Liquids

It is important to begin giving liquids at the first sign of the flu to maintain the right level of hydration. Please remember that anyone who is sick may not feel like drinking liquids, but it is important to keep giving liquids in order to prevent dehydration.

Try to give the sick adult or child about a gallon of liquid each day. Keep doing this until they look better or their urine is a light yellow. For infants, give enough liquids so they urinate every four to six hours.

If the sick adult or child becomes dehydrated, give them small amounts of liquids frequently. For example, give sips or spoonfuls of liquids every five to 10 minutes over a four-hour period. Watch

for an increase in urination, a lighter color of urine and overall improvement of flu symptoms. These are signs that the liquids are working.

If the sick adult or child is vomiting, do not give any liquids or food by mouth for at least an hour. Let the stomach rest and then give a clear liquid, like water or broth, in small amounts. Start with one teaspoon to one tablespoon every 10 minutes. If they continue to vomit, let the stomach rest again for another hour. Then try to give small but frequent amounts of clear liquids. When the sick adult or child has stopped vomiting, gradually increase the amount of liquids and use liquids with electrolytes (with salt and sugar). After six to eight hours of giving the adult or child clear liquids without vomiting, you can start to give them solid foods that are easy to digest such as saltine crackers, soup, mashed potatoes, or rice.

### **Acceptable Liquids**

It is important for the sick adult or child to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of liquids in order to help fight the flu symptoms and prevent dehydration. The following chart tells you which liquids are good for young children and adults with the flu in order to prevent or treat dehydration. If the sick adult or child is not eating, certain liquids will need to be given in order to treat dehydration and restore the right level of electrolytes (salt and sugar) that the body needs.

## Dehydration Prevention & Treatment Chart

AGE GROUP	PREVENT DEHYDRATION (If Eating)
<b>Infants</b> <i>&lt; 1 year of age</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Breast milk</li> <li>● Standard infant formula</li> <li>● Store-bought oral rehydration solution such as Pedialyte®, Naturalyte®, Infalyte®, or Rehydralyte®</li> <li>● Diluted Juices* (½ water, ½ juice)</li> </ul> <p><i><b>Alternative:</b> Home made Cereal Based Oral Rehydration Solution (CBORS). See recipe on page 27.</i></p>
<b>Toddlers</b> <i>1 to 3 years of age</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Milk (if not vomiting)</li> <li>● Store-bought oral rehydration solution such as Pedialyte®, Naturalyte®, Infalyte®, or Rehydralyte®</li> <li>● Broth, soup</li> <li>● Jell-O® Water (1 package per quart of water, or twice as much water as usual)</li> <li>● Popsicles</li> <li>● Gatorade®</li> <li>● Kool-Aid®</li> <li>● Juices*</li> </ul>
<b>Children</b> <i>over 3 years,</i> <b>Teens and Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Water</li> <li>● Broth, soup</li> <li>● Jell-O® Water (1 package per quart of water, or twice as much water as usual)</li> <li>● Popsicles</li> <li>● Gatorade®</li> <li>● Kool-Aid®</li> <li>● Juices*</li> </ul>

*\*Do not give apple or pear juice because they include a certain type of sugar that increases water loss.*

## PREVENT DEHYDRATION (If NOT Eating) AND TREAT DEHYDRATION (If Eating or NOT Eating)

- ✦ Breast milk
- ✦ Standard infant formula
- ✦ Store-bought oral rehydration solution such as Pedialyte®, Naturalyte®, Infalyte®, or Rehydralyte®

**Alternative:** Home made Cereal-Based Oral Rehydration Solution (CBORS). See recipe on page 27.

- ✦ Store-bought oral rehydration solution such as Pedialyte®, Naturalyte®, Infalyte®, or Rehydralyte®

**Alternate:** Home made Cereal Based Oral Rehydration Solution (CBORS). See recipe on page 27.

- ✦ Home made Oral Rehydration Solution. See recipe on page 26.



## Homemade Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) Recipes

Instead of a store bought rehydration or sports drinks (such as Gatorade®) you can make your own oral rehydration solution at home.

### Preparing a One Liter Oral Rehydration Solution [ORS] using Salt, Sugar and Water

Mix an oral rehydration solution using one of the following recipes; depending on ingredients and container availability.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- One level teaspoon of salt
- Eight level teaspoons of sugar
- One liter of clean drinking or boiled water and then cooled 5 cupfuls (each cup about 200 ml.)

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Stir the mixture until the salt and sugar dissolve. An efficient and effective homemade remedy to be used when watery diarrhea strikes and is a good substitute for oral rehydration salts.

## Homemade Cereal-Based ORS

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 to 1 cup precooked baby rice cereal or 1 1/2 tablespoons of granulated sugar
- 2 cups of water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Mix well the rice cereal (or sugar), water, and salt together until the mixture thickens but is not too thick to drink.
- Give the mixture often by spoon and offer as much as the sick person will accept (every minute if possible).
- Continue giving the mixture with the goal of replacing the fluid lost: one cup lost, give a cup. Even if the sick person is vomiting, the mixture can be offered in small amounts (1-2 teaspoons) every few minutes or so.
- Banana or other non-sweetened mashed fruit can help provide potassium.

Store the liquid in a cool place. Chilling the ORS may help. If ORS is needed after 24 hours, make a fresh solution.

More information can be found at <http://rehydrate.org/solutions/homemade.htm>

Notes: Use of homemade CBORS should be considered as a last option because of the chance for mixing mistakes, which could be a problem for infants. Children are also less likely to take cereal-based solutions than glucose-based solutions. However, when properly mixed and used, CBORS has been found to be as effective as Pedialyte. *Source: Pediatrics Vol 100 No. 5. November 1997, p e3, available at: <http://pediatrics/aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/100/5/e3>*

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## Liquids to Avoid

Avoid certain liquids like alcohol and caffeinated drinks (coffee, herbal teas, caffeinated sodas, etc.) as they can cause further dehydration. Make sure the sick person does not drink any of these liquids or use tobacco. Smoking should not be allowed in the home while family and household members are sick.

## Keep a Home Care Log

Keeping a home care log is important. Write down the date, time, fever, symptoms, medicines given and dosage. Keep an eye on changes in symptoms or new symptoms. Make a new entry at least twice a day or when symptoms change. This information will be very helpful if you need to call your medical provider.

## Avoid Unneeded Medical Visits

In communities hard hit by the flu, healthcare appointments may be hard to get. Unless you are at high risk for flu complications or are experiencing very severe symptoms, try to recover at home. Keep in mind that people with the flu can spread the flu to others, so it's best to avoid leaving home unless absolutely necessary. Also, sick household members may be more comfortable being cared for at home rather than going out to an appointment.

Proper care can help prevent complications such as dehydration. Knowing what signs to watch for and when to seek medical help can help your family member get early treatment, if complications do occur.

## Calling for Medical Advice

People with a chronic disease or condition, and women who are pregnant, should be in contact with their medical provider during a pandemic.

Contact your primary care physician for medical advice if you or a loved one is experiencing any of the following symptoms during a pandemic:

- Infants under three months with a rectal temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher.
- Fever in persons not responding to fever medicines within six hours.
- Fever lasts more than five days.
- Fever that went away for one to two days, then comes back.
- Chronic disease patients (heart or lung disease, HIV/AIDS, cancer patients, etc) with complications.
- Signs of severe dehydration (no urine in 12 hours, dry mouth, no tears) and the sick person has stopped taking liquids.
- Signs of respiratory problems such as chest pain, difficulty breathing or wheezing, grunting, nasal flaring, and chest wall retractions.

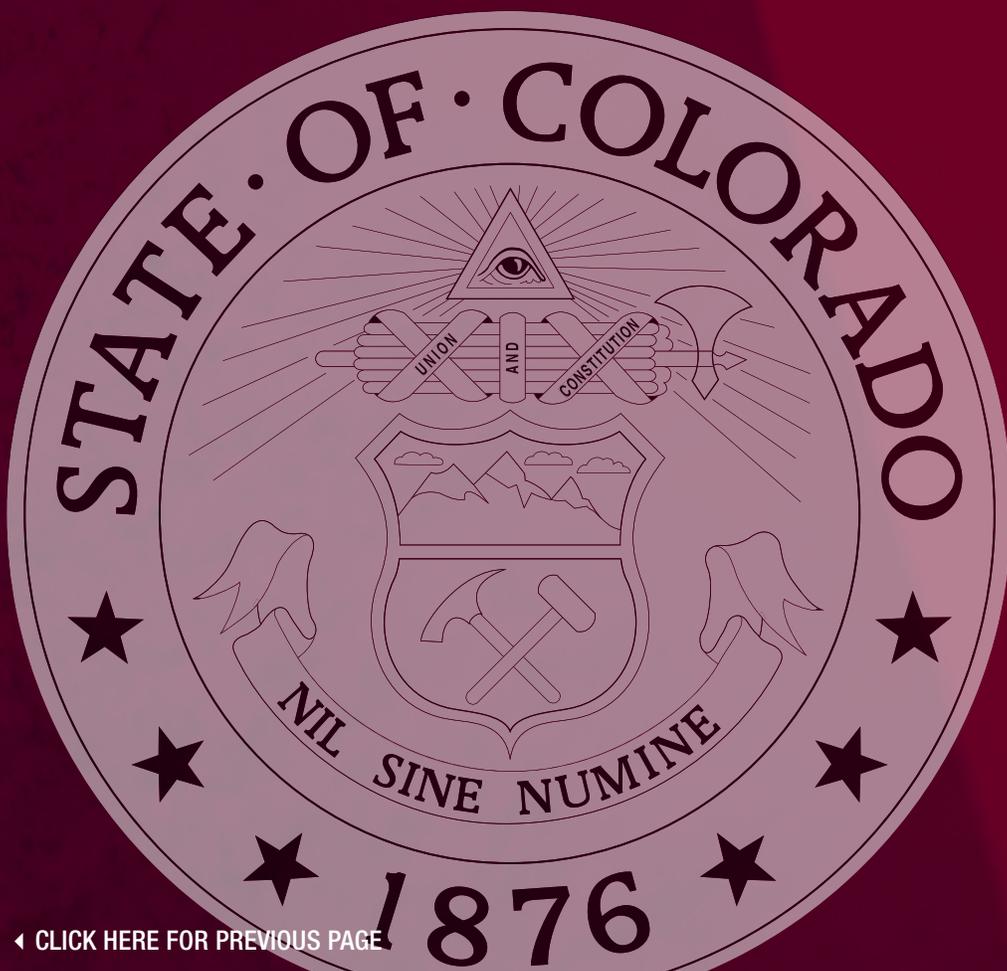
- Cough that produces blood.
- Seizures.
- Severe ear pain or severe muscle pain.
- Change in mental status.
- Vomiting for more than an hour.
- Psychological emergencies – person is potentially harmful to self or others.

## When to Call 911

Call 911 if you cannot reach your medical provider and the sick adult or child has a problem listed above, or if the sick adult or child has any of the following symptoms:

- Severe respiratory distress (struggling for each breath, unable to speak or cry, severe retractions, cyanosis)
- Slow shallow, weak breathing (respiratory depression)
- Stopped breathing (apneic episode)
- Bluish lips, tongue or face (cyanosis)
- Shock suspected (very weak, limp, not moving, too weak to stand, pale cool skin)
- Other life-threatening emergency such as first-time seizure





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# HOME CARE SUPPLIES

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## Home Care Supplies

It's important to be prepared for any emergency such as an earthquake, fire or the pandemic flu. It's a good idea to gradually buy items now so that you have at least two weeks of emergency supplies for each person in your home.

### **General Emergency Supplies Checklist (Chart 1)**

This checklist can help you plan on what type of emergency supplies you'll need and what quantities to buy for your household. This list includes examples of what types of basic emergency supplies you should have on hand like a first aid kit, clean water, emergency cash, batteries, radios, flashlights, etc.

### **Pandemic Flu Supplies Checklist (Chart 2)**

In addition to your regular emergency supplies, additional items should be added for pandemic flu preparedness so that you are able to care for sick family members at home. This checklist can help you plan on what type of home care supplies you'll need in case of pandemic flu and what amounts to buy for your household.

Chart 1

## Two-Week Emergency Supplies Checklist

Items	2 People	4 People	Your quantity <i>x household members</i>	Check off
<b>EMERGENCY SUPPLIES</b>				
First aid kit and instructions	1 medium kit	1 large kit		
Emergency radio with batteries	1	1		
Lanterns, flashlights, candles	2 flashlights	4 flashlights		
Batteries	2 (12-packs)	4 (12-packs)		
Trash bags	20 bags	40 bags		
Barbeque pits, camping stove	As needed	As needed		
Lighter fluid and matches	2 containers/ boxes	4 containers/ boxes		
Fire extinguisher A-B-C type	2	2		
Manual can opener knife	1	1		
Plastic food containers	10	20		
Zipper bags, one-gallon size	100	200		
Paper/plastic eating utensils	100 sets	200 sets		
Warm blankets, sleeping bags	2 sets	4 sets		
Extra warm clothing and shoes	4 full sets	8 full sets		
Personal hygiene products	As needed	As needed		
Extra pair of glasses or contacts	As needed	As needed		
Baby and/or pet supplies	As needed	As needed		
Toolkit with wrench, pliers, etc.	1	1		
Utility instructions, maps, etc.	2 copies	4 copies		
Copies of important documents	As needed	As needed		
<b>IF POSSIBLE:</b>				
Cell phone with battery charger	1	1		
Emergency cash	\$200	\$400		
Contact list for key medical provider(s), school(s), employer(s), family members, neighbors, etc. Card games or entertainment.				

## Two-Week Pandemic Flu Supplies Checklist

*Chart 2*

Items
<b>PANDEMIC FLU SUPPLIES</b>
Thermometer
Eye dropper
Surgical or procedural masks (minimum of two per day per person)
Bleach, unscented
Laundry detergent
Dishwashing detergent
Soap
Toilet paper
Paper towels
Tissues
Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
Drinks with electrolytes
Prescription medicines
Pain and fever medicines
Cough medicines
Liquid medicine for children
Rubber gloves (for cleaning)
Disposable gloves
Antibacterial wipes/gel

## Emergency Food Supplies

When purchasing and storing non-perishable food for emergency purposes, buy foods that are nutritious and that the people in your household will eat. Store non-perishable foods in a cool, dry place out of the reach of young children and pets. Use plastic, resealable containers to store bulk food products if needed. A mixture of foods is best to maintain normal energy and body functions.

It's a good idea to slowly build up your supply with foods that will not spoil. Each household member will need at least one balanced meal and one gallon of drinking water per day. Remember to check expiration dates regularly and replace expired food items with new items. It is a good idea to rotate emergency food supplies at least twice a year, however, be sure to remove items that have exceeded their expiration or 'use by' date.

The following tips will help you select and store foods so that your food supply lasts.

- Keep the normal food pantry separate from your stored emergency supplies.
- Focus on picking foods that can satisfy your family.
- Pick foods that keep a long time before they spoil. For example, freeze-dried foods do not spoil and they can last for long periods of time. Dehydrated foods can also be kept for a long time if they are stored properly.

- 
- Look for foods that don't need to be refrigerated or that don't need to be heated.
  - Label foods with clear descriptions. For example, write on the food container: 'use-by this (day)' or 'best if used before (day)'.
  - Make sure to store items in plastic containers with tight-fitting lids so that bugs cannot get into them.
  - Make sure to include comfort foods that household members like.

## **Two-Week Emergency Food Supply Checklist**

This checklist provides examples of foods that will not spoil easily. It is a good idea to gradually buy items now so that you have at least a two-week supply of food for each person in your home. Food should be used by the expiration date listed on the package. Rotate food stored in your home every six months to ensure that food items are used before their expiration dates.

[http://www.whatifcolorado.com/emergency\\_kit\\_calculator.asp](http://www.whatifcolorado.com/emergency_kit_calculator.asp)

## Food Items

### NON-PERISHABLE

Oatmeal

Pasta

Rice

Beans/Lentils

Dried cereal

Canned vegetables

Canned fruit

Pasta sauces

Canned or dried soup

Canned or dried meat

Crackers

Energy bars

Nuts

Peanut butter

Sports drinks

Baby foods

Pet foods

Coffee and/or tea

Flour

Bread mix

Sugar

Salt (includes medical use)

Powdered milk

Yeast, dried

Baking soda

---

## Storing Water

It is important to keep water for cleaning and washing separate from drinking water. You can either buy bottled water or fill containers with tap water. Store enough water for you and all household members, including pets and children, for a minimum of three days.

Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts per person for drinking, two quarts for sanitation). Extremely warm temperatures and intense physical activity can double that amount; children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more.

- **Collect the water from a safe supply.** If you are connected to a state-approved public water system, your water should be considered safe unless you have been notified otherwise. If you have your own supply, contact your local health department about how to have your water tested.
- **Use proper storage containers.** Store the water in containers that are made for water storage, or glass and plastic jugs previously used for juice, milk, pop, or bottled water. Clean containers thoroughly before using and make sure that the container has a tight-fitting cap. Never use containers that were previously used for pesticides, chemicals, solvents, anti-freeze, oils, etc.

- **Store in a cool place, safe from flooding, freezing, and other natural disasters.** It is recommended that you use or discard the stored water and replace it with a fresh supply every six months.

## Water for Cleaning/Washing

For cleaning and washing water, if possible, choose large containers such as a plastic garbage can that can hold about 20 gallons of water. Plastic containers such as plastic liters and fruit juice bottles can be also be used. Make sure to clean them well and to mark them with the date you put the water into the container. Store containers in a cool, dark place. If the water sits for six months without being used, empty the containers and start over and store new fresh or purified water.

## Drinking Water

If you fill your own containers for drinking water, make sure to clean the containers first and mark them with the date you put the water into the container. Again, store these containers in a cool, dark place. If the water sits for six months without being used, empty the containers and start over and store new fresh or purified water.

You will need one gallon of water per person each day. The table below will help you decide how many gallons of water you will need for your household for a two-week period.

### Two-Week Supply of Drinking Water

Number in Family/Group	Allow 14 Gallons per Person	Total Required
	x 14 gallons	= Total Gallons

### Purifying Water

#### When Do You Need to Purify Drinking Water?

Normally your water is safe to drink, but it may need to be treated if your usual water supply is interrupted or becomes unsafe for drinking. Conditions that may require treatment of drinking water include:

- Special conditions under which your water system or state or local health department informs you that the water should be boiled or treated before drinking
- Disasters such as floods or power outages that interrupt your water supply
- Water supply system disruption or loss of pressure because of line breaks or repairs

There may be times when tap water cannot be used for any purpose, including toilet flushing or firefighting. In these cases, a “Do Not Use” notice would be issued because the water cannot be made safe for use through any standard treatment method. During a “Bottled Water” notice, tap water can generally be used for firefighting and toilet flushing. It is not recommended for consumption, tooth brushing, food washing, cooking, or personal hygiene, especially in sensitive populations such as older persons, young children, or people who are sick or have open wounds. Pay attention to notices from your water system and/or local or state health department about planned water disruptions or other conditions that could signal a problem with your water supply.

Keep the following items on hand to purify water during an emergency:

- Fresh supply of liquid household bleach and kitchen measuring spoons or a medicine dropper (medicine droppers with both teaspoon and milliliter/cc markings are available at drug stores)
- Equipment (propane or gas stoves, outdoor barbeque grills, etc.) needed to boil water. Remember that your usual source of energy may not be available during an emergency. Extra precautions should be taken when using alternate cooking sources:
  - Ensure equipment is functioning properly

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- Use in a well ventilated area to prevent a buildup of carbon monoxide gas
  - Keep children away from heat source
  - Secure equipment and cookware to avoid hot water scalding

## **Boil or Add Bleach**

If a safe supply of water is not available, it should be treated before being used for drinking, cooking, or brushing teeth. There are two primary ways of treating, or purifying water: boiling or adding bleach. If the supply has been made unsafe because of untreated surface water (from floods, streams, or lakes), boiling is the best treatment. If the water is cloudy, it should be filtered before boiling or adding bleach. Filters designed for use when camping, coffee filters, towels (paper or cotton), cheesecloth, or a cotton plug in a funnel are effective ways to filter cloudy water.

## **Boiling**

Boiling is the best way to purify water that is unsafe because of the presence of parasites or bacteria. Boiling should not be used when toxic metals, chemicals (pesticides, solvents, etc.), or nitrates have contaminated the water.

- Place the water in a clean metal or glass container and bring to a full boil. Continue boiling for at least one full minute.

- Boiled water should be kept covered while cooling and should then be stored in the manner previously described under “*Storing Drinking Water For Emergencies.*”

## Adding Liquid Chlorine Bleach

If boiling is not possible, water can be made safe for drinking by treating with unscented liquid household chlorine bleach, such as Clorox, etc. Household bleach is typically between 5% and 6% chlorine. Do not use bleaches that contain perfumes, dyes, or other additives. Be sure to read the label.

- Place the water (filtered if necessary) in a clean container.
- Add the amount of bleach according to the table at the end of this section.
- Mix thoroughly and allow to stand for at least 30 minutes before using (60 minutes if the water is cloudy or very cold).

**Note:** Chlorine and other chemicals will not kill parasites such as *Cryptosporidium* (“Crypto”), which may be present in untreated water. *Cryptosporidium* is an organism that can cause severe illness and even death in persons who have been weakened because of health problems, such as the flu. Boiling is the best water treatment to remove the presence of both bacteria and parasites from untreated water.

## Treating Water with a 5-6% Liquid Chlorine Bleach

**Solution** (Allow treated CLEAR water to stand 30 minutes before using; treated CLOUDY water should stand for 60 minutes)

Volume of Water To Be Treated	Treating Clear Water	Treating Cloudy, Very Cold, or Surface Water*
	Bleach Solution to Add	Bleach Solution to Add
1 quart/1 liter	3 drops	5 drops
1/2 gallon/2 quarts/2 liters	5 drops	10 drops OR 1/8 tsp
1 gallon	10 drops OR 1/8 tsp	20 drops OR 1/4 tsp
5 gallons	50 drops OR 2.5 ml OR 1/2 tsp	5 ml OR 1 tsp
10 gallons	5 ml OR 1 tsp	10 ml OR 2 tsp

*\*Surface water should be filtered prior to disinfection.*

Individual backpacking water purifiers are designed to filter surface waters, but they are intended for short periods only. These type of water purifiers are not designed for household use. If they are used for household water purification, boiling after filtration is recommended. Purification devices should be ANSI/NSF certified to protect against a variety of contaminants. Although many devices improve the taste, odor, and appearance of the water, many do not remove microbiological contaminants and cannot ensure safe drinking water. For example, the PUR water filter that attaches to a standard kitchen faucet may trap some contaminants, but it will not remove or kill many disease-causing microbiological contaminants.

We do not recommend the use of chemical purification tablets, such as iodine tablets, found at pharmacies and sporting goods stores. These tablets are effective in some cases, but will not ensure safe drinking water in all instances.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Every person who takes some action to be better prepared is helping to make our community better prepared.

**Up-to-date information will be available from your medical provider and at the following Web sites:**

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
Emergency Preparedness Website:

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/epr>

U.S. Government Pandemic Flu Website:

[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

Much of the information provided in this booklet is based on current information from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Pandemic Influenza Plan and is subject to change.

**Notes:**

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# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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## Behavioral Health

Behavioral health is the relationship between human behavior and the body, mind and spirit. This section will provide you with an overview of common behavioral health reactions to a public health epidemic, tips for dealing with these reactions, special considerations for different age groups and other ideas and resources that may be useful.

There is potential for a pandemic to last a long time, leaving people to deal with ongoing stress, fear and anxiety from restrictions enforced by authorities and the illness and loss of loved ones. Being prepared for a pandemic can help you feel more in control and lower your stress.

During a catastrophic event in which public health officials recommend or order people to stay at home, it is important to remember that:

- Most people will recover.
- Communities will pull together.
- There is a wide range of acceptable, normal reactions. People react in different ways during a crisis.

To help reduce your stress levels:

- **Be Informed.** Learn as much as you can about pandemic flu, and be aware of how people may react during an influenza outbreak or pandemic.

- **Keep Routines.** Continue to do your regular activities, such as work, exercise, socialization, and meal and sleep schedules, as much as possible.
- **Keep Busy.** Have activities on-hand that can prevent boredom (games, toys, etc.) and keep your mind active.
- **Stay Comfortable.** Keep your living space as comfortable as possible.
- **Be Healthy.** Get plenty of sleep and exercise, eat healthy, and relax. Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer when you can't wash.

## Common Reactions

People react differently when they are under stress. Some typical reactions are:

- Sleep and concentration problems;
- Irritability;
- Sadness, grief and loss;
- Mood swings, and crying easily;
- Feelings of helplessness;
- Worries about loss of income and job protection, especially if asked to stay at home for an extended period of time;
- Concerns about those who you care for;

- Fears of separation from life activities;
- Feeling a lack of control, especially when control is entirely in the hands of others; and
- Increased boredom.

All of these are considered normal reactions.

It may be useful to set up a “buddy-system” with a family member or friend to monitor the emotional well being of one another.

When setting up a buddy system, talk about:

- How you usually act in stressful situations
- Your strengths, or positive feelings and behaviors that surface during stressful times
- How useful your coping skills are and other ways that you might cope
- Ways that your buddy can help identify stress in you
- How you would like to discuss concerns with each other
- A schedule for checking in with each other

## Fear/Anxiety

Initial reactions of disbelief can quickly turn to fear, especially when rumors begin to spread. Fear often takes over as people become afraid of the sickness that is spreading so rapidly and how the changes will affect their daily lives. You may find yourself worried

about health, safety, jobs and finances, family and friends, possible exposure, potential enforcement action, and death. Remember that you are not alone; many people in your community are going through the same experience and may have the same feelings.

Fear actually has a purpose. It is a normal response to danger, or what you think could be a dangerous situation. It helps protect us from injury or harm.

Sometimes fear will have a negative affect on you. Some people may experience:

- **Immobilizing Fear.** This can happen if you find yourself stopping your daily activities, feeling helpless, gloomy, tired or irritable, or if your fear makes it hard to sleep or eat healthy.
- **Avoidance of Low Risk Activities.** Sometimes fear causes you to stay away from any activity that is even remotely connected to the real threat, such as the risk of illness. If you learn of a lot of people with flu in your community this winter, an example of extreme behavior might be that you might decide to stay at home all the time, even if it means that you could lose your job or that you don't have food.
- **Avoidance of Medical Facilities.** Fear is not normal if you avoid going to the doctor or hospital even though you have good reason to get medical help.

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Here are some tips to help prevent fear from becoming overwhelming:

- **Listen to the people you can trust.** Follow reasonable directions recommended by public health and emergency officials, but don't go overboard. If you find that you don't trust those officials, contact someone you trust in your community, such as your minister, your city council person or your doctor.
- **Avoid unreliable sources of information.** Incorrect information may spread quickly, which will result in more confusion and fear. Listen to information from trusted officials, checking the facts when you hear rumors and ask others you know do the same.
- **Avoid watching the news constantly.** Do not listen to or watch the news constantly. Establish set times that you and your family will receive updates on the crisis, and stick to that schedule. Most of the time, the news will repeat the same information over and over. Some people have more anxiety and long-term mental health problems from watching and listening to frightening information over and over.
- **Take control of your situation.** You can reduce your anxiety if you follow the instructions from trusted people. It may help you to write down what you can control in the

situation, and how your decisions can help you. Focus on those areas instead of problems that are out of your control.

Anxiety during a public health crisis like a pandemic is normal. Anxiety is the brain's reaction to fear. Some anxiety can be healthy, and make you more likely to protect yourself. Anxiety can become harmful, however, if it is out of proportion to the actual risk, or lasts longer than is reasonable. Anxiety also can aggravate health problems by interfering with sleep and eating.

You may be anxious if you experience any of the following:

- **Edginess.** You are constantly tense, jumpy, worried or on edge.
- **Difficulty with normal tasks.** Anxiety interferes with your daily functioning, such as your work, school and family responsibilities.
- **Panic.** You experience sudden, unexpected attacks of panic. You may feel like you can't breathe or that your heart is racing.
- **Avoidance.** You avoid situations because they make you anxious. For example, you never listen to the news or guidance from officials.
- **Concentration problems.** You have difficulty focusing on simple tasks like feeding your children or working.

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- **Extreme pessimism.** You expect the worst possible outcome in various situations, and these expectations frequently worry you.
  - **Restlessness.** You have a hard time relaxing and you become irritated and annoyed frequently.
  - **Health symptoms.** You may experience physical symptoms such as a pounding heart, sweating, stomach upset, dizziness, shortness of breath, muscle tension and headaches.

Use the following tips to help prevent anxiety from negatively affecting your health:

- **Learn.** Become informed about pandemic flu, and what could happen in your community during a pandemic. This will help reduce the uncertainty of the situation, and help you identify reasonable reactions and when your behavior is extreme.
- **Get help.** Know what help is available to you and how to use it, including low-cost counseling, free hotlines, your doctor or local clinic, websites and other resources that may be in your community. Your local public health center or your community mental health center are good resources. Make a list of these tools before you need them.

## Anger

If you are forced to change your daily habits, you may adapt to the changes easily or may get angry that your routines are interrupted. During a pandemic, it is possible that public health officials may recommend that people stay at home, or even order schools, stores and other gathering places to close. Many people become angry when they feel out of control of their own lives, or if they are facing a threat such as pandemic flu.

Anger may be a normal reaction to feeling scared and out of control, and anger may often be acceptable, but negative behaviors caused by anger are not. It is important to notice your anger, and try to reduce your distress. The following are ways to decrease anger:

- **Take a time-out.** Step away from the situation for a short time (5-10 minutes) to calm down.
- **Understand the threat.** A pandemic is a serious health situation. Ask yourself how it is most threatening to you. What are you most worried about? Your work? Family members? Your health? What might be the effect on your everyday life?
- **Take positive action.** You can decide to take healthy actions for yourself such as exercise, relaxation techniques, thinking about how other people are affected and ways to change what is making you angry. For some people, exercise or other healthy physical activities may reduce your “anger energy.”

- **Be informed.** Get regular updates from the news. Avoid constantly watching or listening to news. Thinking about the information a little at a time will help you feel a sense of control over the situation.
- **Ask yourself why.** Ask yourself for the reasons behind the actions you decide to take. By understanding the reasoning behind the tasks, it will help to reduce your anger.
- **Get support.** If you are having trouble with anger, contact your community mental health center for resources.

In a situation involving threats and violence, refer yourself or the other person to a mental health professional. Contact law enforcement if you feel that you are at risk of violence.

## Irritability and Sleep Issues

When the stress of a crisis begins to wear people down, they may have short tempers and/or problems sleeping. Becoming overly sensitive and snapping at one another can occur. Worry and doubt might take over your thoughts, and it can be difficult to turn off these thoughts in your mind when it's time to go to sleep.

The following are tips for coping with irritability and sleep problems:

- **Be patient.** Remember to take care of yourself and to be patient with others.

- **Take breaks.** Take time out from taking care of others and other tasks. Sometimes it helps to have time alone.
- **Stay hydrated.** Be sure you drink enough water.
- **Talk.** Discuss the situation and how it affects you.
- **Exercise.** Do physical activity early in the day. Exercise right before bedtime can interfere with sleep.
- **Keep your routines.** Have a regular schedule for going to bed and waking up each day.
- **Eliminate caffeine and alcohol.** Drinks and food with caffeine or alcohol can interfere with sleep and increase irritability.
- **Complete unfinished business.** If you don't fall asleep within 30 minutes, get up, move to another room and do something else for a short time.
- **Turn off technology.** Avoid watching television or surfing the Internet to help you relax or sleep.
- **Don't worry about getting to sleep.** Worrying about sleep will probably make it even harder to get to sleep. Try doing an activity that helps you to relax, such as reading or meditating.

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## Loneliness and Boredom

During a pandemic, officials may recommend or even order us to stay home. For some people, that may mean they are alone more than usual and may miss family members and friends. Look for ways to maintain connections to others. This may be more difficult than usual since business and social activities may be cancelled at the community level; family interaction and physical contact may be restricted in order to reduce the spread of illness; schools may be closed; and children may be separated from friends.

First, remember that it is a temporary situation. Here are some tips to help you and your family cope with loneliness and boredom:

- **Keep in touch.** Use the telephone, mail and Internet to maintain contact with friends and family, near and far.
- **Seek social supports.** Visit with neighbors from a safe distance. Consider using online communities. Before you need it, set up a way for people in your family, or your church or other important social networks to “chat” over the computer or through telephone groups.
- **Keep active.** Do activities that do not involve physical interaction, such as reading, home projects, video games and craft projects.
- **Try new things.** Get ideas from other people who have found activities to do at home. This could be the perfect time to read that book you got last year.

- **Exercise.** It is easy to exercise at home with home exercise equipment or household items that can substitute for equipment. For example, try using canned food to substitute for weights.
- **Entertain others.** Help your children stay occupied at home with activities such as arts and crafts, books, movies, family games or learning a new skill.

## Grief and Loss

A pandemic will result in significant loss of life within most communities. You may personally experience losses and it can take time to bounce back. Grief is a natural and normal response to the sadness and confusion that comes from losing someone important to you. Grief occurs with many types of losses, including death, divorce, job loss, a move away from family and friends or even the loss of good health due to illness. Other feelings commonly occur with grief, such as helplessness, powerlessness, guilt and shock.

You may be experiencing grief if you have any of the following feelings:

- **Unanswered questions.** You feel like there are many unanswered questions without explanations.
- **Doubt in your beliefs.** You question your cultural and/or religious belief system.

- **Emptiness.** You feel empty and numb, as if you are in shock.
- **Physical changes.** You notice physical changes such as trembling, nausea, trouble breathing, muscle weakness, dry mouth, or trouble sleeping and eating.
- **Anger.** You become angry at a situation, a particular person or just angry in general.
- **Guilt.** You feel guilty. You find yourself thinking or saying, “If only I had...” “I should have...” and “I wish I would have...” statements.
- **Sleep changes.** You have trouble sleeping or you begin to have strange dreams or nightmares.
- **Absent-mindedness.** You find yourself forgetting things easily, or “spacing out.”
- **Social withdrawal.** You avoid people, even when officials tell you it is safe to resume normal activities.
- **Lack of desire.** You don’t want to return to work or other daily activities.

While these feelings and behaviors are normal during grief, they should pass. The length of time spent grieving is different for each person. If you think you may be stuck in the grief process and/or need help moving through it, here are some tips:

- **Talk about it.** Share your feelings with someone you trust.
- **Protect your future.** Postpone making major life changes such as selling a house, changing jobs or moving to a new city or state until you are able to think more clearly.
- **Avoid isolation.** You may have to force yourself to engage in social contact. Use the telephone, Internet or other community activities to contact your old friends for support if they are available. If they are not, reach out to others and broaden your world.
- **Think of your strengths.** When grief makes you feel helpless, think about your strengths and put them to work to help restore your self-confidence.
- **Take care of yourself.** During times of stress, your body is more susceptible to illness. So now, more than ever, it is important to eat a nutritious diet and get plenty of rest.
- **Keep active.** Increase your physical activity, take up old hobbies or explore new ones, or volunteer for a cause that is important to you. Staying active can help you regain your ability to think clearly.
- **Keep your sense of humor.** Laughter makes people feel better. Finding humor during hard times promotes healing.

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## When should you get help?

The wide range of extreme emotions can become overwhelming. If you or a loved one experiences any of the following, it is recommended that you get help from a trained counselor or therapist:

- Difficulty providing basic care for yourself and/or others.
- Impairment or inability to do daily activities.
- Suicidal and/or homicidal thoughts or actions.
- Violent behavior.
- Feeling disoriented, including ongoing confusion about where you are or the time and date, memory loss or inability to understand what is happening.
- Hearing voices, seeing visions, thoughts based on fantasies, obsessive or compulsive thoughts and behavior.
- A previously identified mental health condition reoccurs or becomes worse.

## Finding Help

- Your local community mental health center  
Call the Colorado Department of Human Services at 303-866-7400 or go to [http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/dmh/directories\\_cmhc.htm](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/dmh/directories_cmhc.htm)
- American Red Cross  
Call 1-800-417-0495 or go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or [www.denver-redcross.org](http://www.denver-redcross.org)
- Salvation Army  
Go to [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)
- Your doctor or health clinic
- Your pastor or rabbi, or the hospital chaplain
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline:  
Call 1-800-273-TALK

## Age-Specific Reactions

Different people react to stress differently depending on their age or other developmental considerations. People of all ages experience fear, anxiety, anger, irritability, sleep problems, loneliness, boredom and grief, but children and teenagers may react in other ways, too.

Age	What reactions will you most likely see?	What can you do to help?
1-5	<p>Emotional reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sadness</li><li>• Withdrawal</li></ul> <p>Behavioral reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bed-wetting, thumb sucking, clinging to parents</li><li>• Fear of the dark</li><li>• Avoidance of sleeping alone</li><li>• Increased crying</li></ul> <p>Physical reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of appetite</li><li>• Stomach aches</li><li>• Nausea</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage expression of feeling and thoughts, without making judgment</li><li>• Provide predictable bedtime routines</li><li>• Avoid unnecessary separations from siblings or parents</li><li>• Permit the child to sleep in parents' room temporarily</li><li>• Reduce media exposure, especially news about the crisis or disaster. Limit your own television and radio, especially if it makes you worried. If you are worried, your child can sense it.</li><li>• Encourage expression through play activities</li><li>• Let child know it is okay to feel upset when something scary happens</li><li>• Enjoy your child and take part in activities together</li></ul>

Age	What reactions will you most likely see?	What can you do to help?
6-11	<p>Emotional reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School avoidance</li> <li>• Withdrawal from friends, familiar activities</li> <li>• Obsessive worry about disaster and safety</li> </ul> <p>Behavioral reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decline in school performance</li> <li>• Aggressive behavior at home or school</li> <li>• Hyperactive or silly behavior</li> <li>• Whining, clinging, acting like a younger child</li> <li>• Increased competition with younger siblings for parents' attention</li> </ul> <p>Physical reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Stomach aches</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Speech difficulties</li> <li>• Tics: sudden, spasmodic, painless, involuntary muscular contraction, frequently of the face</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give extra attention</li> <li>• Relax expectations of performance at home and at school temporarily</li> <li>• Set gentle but firm limits for acting-out behavior</li> <li>• Provide structured but undemanding home chores and activities</li> <li>• Encourage expression of thoughts and feelings through words and play</li> <li>• Involve the child in preparation of family emergency kit, home drills</li> <li>• Rehearse safety measures for future disasters</li> </ul>

Age	What reactions will you most likely see?	What can you do to help?
12-18	<p>Emotional reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of interest in peer social activities, hobbies, recreation</li> <li>• Sadness or depression</li> <li>• Resistance to authority</li> <li>• Feelings of inadequacy and helplessness</li> </ul> <p>Behavioral reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decline in school performance</li> <li>• Rebellion at home or school, disagreeable behavior</li> <li>• Decline in previous responsible behavior</li> <li>• Nervous behavior or decrease in energy level, apathy</li> <li>• Delinquent behavior such as vandalism</li> <li>• Social withdrawal such as avoiding school or friends</li> </ul> <p>Physical reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Stomach aches</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Skin blemishes</li> <li>• Complaints of vague aches and pains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give extra attention</li> <li>• Relax expectations of performance at home and at school temporarily</li> <li>• Encourage discussion of disaster experiences with trusted friends and adults. Avoid forcing him or her to discuss feelings with parents.</li> <li>• Encourage physical activities</li> <li>• Rehearse family safety measures for future disasters</li> <li>• Encourage resumption of social activities, athletics, clubs, etc.</li> <li>• Encourage participation in community recovery work</li> </ul>

## Other Considerations

- **Medications.** Altering medication can cause behavioral health symptoms, and/or increase reactions. Follow the advice of your doctor or healthcare professional, and communicate with them about any mental health concerns that you have. Keep medical supplies, prescriptions and non-prescription drugs on hand.
- **Creature comforts.** Feeling comfortable physically and mentally is calming. Keep your environment clean and comfortable. Have favorite comfort items such as food and furniture around. For young people, favorite toys or blankets can help the child feel more secure.
- **Cultural and spiritual beliefs.** If you find comfort in your cultural or spiritual beliefs, use the tools of your beliefs – books, community members, spiritual leaders or prayers.
- **Support the community and those in quarantine and isolation.** Keep yourself and your family busy while also helping the community and others. For example, you can support those in quarantine and isolation by writing cards or letters.
- **Pets.** Your pets also need things to do. Spend time with them to reassure them and help yourself as well.

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- **Fresh air.** If possible, get some fresh air to keep you and your family from feeling confined.
  - **Use relaxation techniques.** Breathing exercises, meditation or prayer can be helpful for alleviating and preventing a variety of physical and mental symptoms.
  - **Stay positive.** Use your unexpected time at home as an opportunity to get things done around the house and for spending time with your loved ones.
  - **Use social media tools.** Stay in contact with others by using Internet networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter. If you don't know how to use this technology, this is a great time to learn.



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## Resources

For more information about health issues and emergency preparedness, please visit the following Web sites:

- [www.cdphe.state.co.us](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us)  
(Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment)
- [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)  
(U.S. Department of Health & Human Services)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- [www.readycolorado.com](http://www.readycolorado.com)
- [www.whatifcolorado.com](http://www.whatifcolorado.com)

Follow CDPHE on Twitter: [twitter.com/COhealth](https://twitter.com/COhealth)

Join the COHealth Google Group: [groups.google.com/group/cohealth](https://groups.google.com/group/cohealth)

*Home Care for Pandemic Flu.* The American National Red Cross 2006. Retrieved November 29, 2006 from The American Red Cross Web site: [http://www.denver-redcross.org/site/DocServer/RC\\_PandemicFluBrochure.pdf?docID=1381](http://www.denver-redcross.org/site/DocServer/RC_PandemicFluBrochure.pdf?docID=1381)

*Colorado's Plan for Pandemic Influenza (English)*

*Pandemic Flu Fact Sheet (English)*

*Pandemic Flu Fact Sheet (Spanish)*

*READYColorado Pandemic Flu brochure (English)*

*READYColorado Pandemic Flu brochure (Spanish)*

*Social Distancing Support Guidelines For Pandemic Readiness*

*Tips for People With Disabilities Factsheet (English)*

*Tips for People With Disabilities Factsheet (Spanish)*

*Preparedness: Tips for People with Special Medical Needs (English)*

*Preparedness: Tips for People with Special Medical Needs (Spanish)*

## **Additional Mental Health Resources**

### **Colorado Division of Behavioral Health**

303-866-7400 or 800-811-7648

TDD: 303-866-7471

[www.cdhs.state.co.us/dmh/](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/dmh/)



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**Colorado Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health**

303-572-0302 or 888-569-7500

[www.coloradofederation.org](http://www.coloradofederation.org)

**Mental Health America of Colorado**

720-208-2220 or 800-456-3249

[www.mhacolorado.org](http://www.mhacolorado.org)

**National Alliance in Mental Illness (NAMI) Colorado**

303-321-3104 or 888-566-6264

[www.namicolorado.org](http://www.namicolorado.org)

**American Psychological Association (APA)**

(800) 374-2721

[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

**National Center for PTSD**

[www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)

**National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**

301-443-4513 or 866-615-6464

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

**U.S. National Mental Health Information Center**

800-789-2647

TDD: 866-889-2647

[www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov)

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