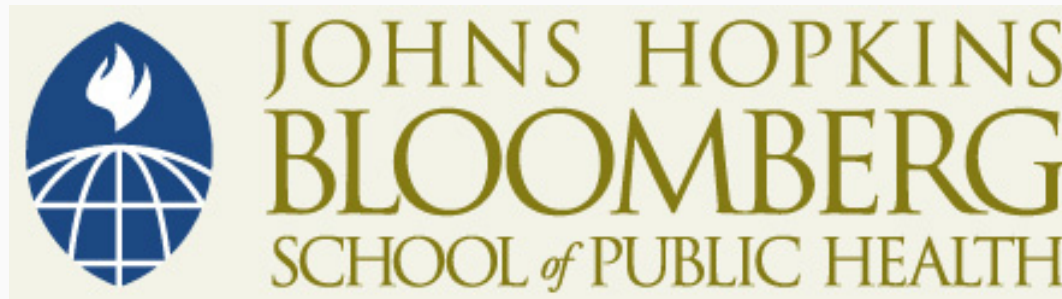


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Personal Preparedness Planning For Public Health Workers

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Learning More About Readiness

Part 3 of 3

Essential Planning Elements

- **Know** where to turn for information in a crisis
- **Understand** key health care issues following mass casualty incidents and how you can prepare yourself and your family for these issues
- **Consider** individuals with special needs
- **Understand** answers to FAQs

Information Sources in a Crisis

- Tune to local AM radio for alerts and periodic updates
- Tune to local television news channels

Healthcare Provider Considerations

- Healthcare delivery systems will quickly reach maximum capacity
- Medical advice/physical examinations may be limited
- Elective or postponable surgeries will be cancelled
- Existing health conditions may be complicated during stressful situations

■ **Things you should do:**

- Have all prescriptions
- Keep 3 days of prescriptions on hand at all times
- Have your insurance information available
- Have immunization record handy
- Know style and serial number of medical devices (e.g., pacemakers)
- List known food and drug allergies
- Write down the health conditions of your immediate family

Advance Planning

- Attend a first aid/CPR class
- Memorize two routes to the office of your health care provider
- Hospital visits should be reserved for known exposures, trauma, and other critical health events
- Donate blood to save lives; it will be critically needed

Special Needs Considerations

- Children
- Elderly
- Disabled
- Pets

FAQ #1: Should I Purchase a Gas Mask?

- **NO!**
- A gas mask will only protect you if you are wearing it during an attack
 - It is highly unlikely that you will know when an attack is coming
- The mask must be of the right type, must fit properly, and requires training to be used effectively

FAQ #2: What About Disposable Masks?

- Disposable, paper masks (e.g., N95 masks) suffer from the same inadequacies as gas masks in a biological weapons attack situation—when to wear the mask, proper fit, etc.—and would likely offer little protection, if any, from a BW attack
- In addition they provide no protection against chemical attacks

FAQ #2: *What About Disposable Masks?*

- Nevertheless—they may help prevent exposure to potentially dangerous substances aerosolized after an explosion
- Any dense-weave cotton material that snugly covers your nose and mouth can help filter contaminants in an emergency
- More info at http://www.ready.gov/clean_air.html

FAQ #3: What Is “Shelter-in-Place”?

- **Shelter-in-place** means:
 - Selecting a small, interior room—with no or few windows
 - Sealing the room off to limit airflow (e.g., duct tape/plastic) into the room
 - Taking temporary cover there to reduce exposure to potentially dangerous substances in the air
- It does **not** mean sealing off your entire home or office building
- Additional resources:
 - www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/shelterinplace.pdf
 - www.ready.gov/stay_or_go.html

FAQ # 4: Should I Shelter-in-Place?

- Whether to shelter-in-place depends on the particular circumstances of the attack
- In a **covert biological attack**, you will not know when to seal off a room and stay in there
- Nevertheless, it is possible that circumstances could require sheltering-in-place
 - Listen to health authorities
- More info at **http://www.ready.gov/stay_or_go.html**

FAQ #5: Should I Stockpile My Own Antibiotics?

■ **NO!**

■ Why not?

- No single antibiotic protects against all potential bio-weapons agents
- Ineffective against viruses
- Limited shelf life
- Can have serious side effects
- Should only be taken with medical guidance

■ **The most important things to do following a mass incident are:**

- Remain calm
- Be patient
- Listen carefully to information from and follow the advice of medical and public health authorities
- Implement personal/family preparedness communications plan
- Be accessible and ready to serve in your public health response roles per your health department's guidance

Where to Get More Information

- By U.S. mail/phone

- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528
1-800-BE-READY

- Red Cross USA

- Visit <http://www.redcross.org/> to find your local chapter's contact information

Where to Get More Information

- <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/Agent/agentlist.asp>
- <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/hsas.html>
- <http://www.ready.gov/>
- <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>
- http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/theme_home2.jsp