

Helpful Websites

Minnesota Department of Health
www.health.state.mn.us

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org/prepare/

Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov

**Minnesota Department of Homeland
Security/Emergency Management**
www.hsem.state.mn.us

Nicollet County Public Health
www.co.nicollet.mn.us



Nicollet County Public Health Preparedness

**Public Health Preparedness
Coordinator**
507.934.4140

Nicollet County Public Health
507.934.0459

*Nicollet
County*

*Public Health
Disaster
Preparedness*

What is a public health emergency?

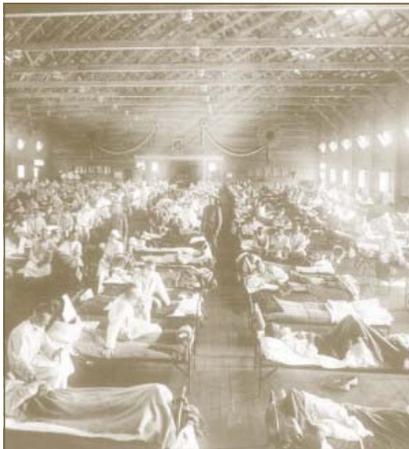
A public health emergency would be declared when the public is exposed to a life-threatening virulent biological agent. Depending on the agent, either mass clinics would be held to provide medications or immunizations to the public or, if there is no medication or vaccine to treat the disease, isolation and quarantine strategies would be implemented,

What is Bioterrorism?

Bioterrorism is the use or threatened use of bacteria or viruses as weapons to cause illness or death as a result of person to person droplet (coughing, sneezing, or speaking with 3-6 feet of another person) or airborne transmission (droplets that remain suspended in the air or are carried on air currents through a room or ventilation system).

What diseases can be used as biological weapons?

Those of most concern include anthrax, smallpox, botulism, plague or viral hemorrhagic fevers such as ebola. Each of these diseases



What Can I do Now to Prepare?

What can I do? Have a family plan.

The American Red Cross encourages every organization, individual and family to take time to prepare for any emergency, disaster or public health emergency.

Be informed: During an event tune to your radio, television or click on to a web-based site. Newspapers will be another source of information.

You may also receive a computerized phone call with instructions from either public health or the emergency management department. Listen carefully. This will not be a telemarketer. The phone call will give you helpful instructions on what you can do during this situation.

Wash Your Hands: Believe it or not, Your mother was right! "Handwashing is the most effective way to prevent the spread of disease!"

are spread by person to person contact with the exception of anthrax which is spread through the air at the contaminated site.

Are there any diseases that can cause a public health emergency that are not a result of bioterrorism?

Yes, a pandemic influenza epidemic would most likely be caused by a new or novel infectious agent. There would be little to no immunity in the general public. The disease would be spread person to person just as the influenza virus typically circulates each winter. The number of deaths would be much greater than for a typical influenza season and would affect the entire nation. Vaccines, if available, would be in short supply.

What public health disaster would Nicollet County residents be most likely to experience?

History tells us that it is likely that a pandemic influenza outbreak will occur in the future. There were three pandemic influenza outbreaks in the twentieth century; the most serious of these was the 1918 Spanish influenza outbreak. The avian "bird flu" situation is being watched closely for a possible mutation of the virus that could result in person to person contact increasing the potential for a pandemic influenza situation.

Shelter-in-Place Steps

- Stay inside (including pets).
- Lock all doors/windows.
- If there is danger of explosion—close shades, blinds, curtains.
- Turn off heating/ventilation system, and all fans.
- Close fireplace/woodstove damper.
- Go to interior room.
- If you have pets—prepare a place for them. Pets should not go outside during chemical or radiological emergency.
- As much as possible reduce air flow in the room. Use duct tape and plastic to seal any openings.
- Keep listening to a radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.
- Follow all instructions given by emergency authorities.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE

What is Shelter-in-Place?

“Shelter in place” means to take immediate shelter wherever you are at home, work, school or in between usually for just a short time or several hours.

Why would you be asked to Shelter-in-Place?

Local authorities may instruct you to “shelter-in-place” when chemical or radiological contaminants are released into the environment either accidentally or intentionally.

How would I know when I need to “Shelter-in-Place”?

Emergency Management, fire or police departments warning procedures could be on the Emergency Alert system on radio or television or you may likely receive a computerized automated phone call—called “City Watch”, or even Residential Route Alerting messages announced to neighborhoods from vehicles equipped with public address systems.

How do I Shelter-in-Place?

The instructions will depend on the emergency situation. You will be told what to do. Listen carefully. The Red Cross website has information for each type/location of “shelter-in-place” activities.

MASS DISPENSING CLINICS

How will the residents of Nicollet County get immunized or get medications to help prevent transmission of the disease? Plans for conducting mass dispensing clinics have been made to immunize the entire population of Nicollet County within five days. To accomplish this, 250 persons will be immunized or receive medication each hour for twenty-four hours a day for five days.

How Will Residents Learn About The Mass Dispensing Site Schedules? The best sources of information will be the radio, television, newspapers or the Nicollet County website.

www.co.nicollet.mn.us.

It is also likely that residents will receive a computerized phone call with instructions from either the public health or the emergency management department. Listen carefully. This will not be a telemarketer. The phone call will give you helpful instructions about the specifics of the mass dispensing clinic site.

What kind of instructions can be expected? Residents will be directed to go to one of four sites in the county for triaging prior to being given medication. All residents will be assigned a specific time to come to the clinic site.

What is triaging? On arrival at the mass dispensing site, each person will be triaged (or interviewed) to determine if they have any symptoms of the contagious disease or have been exposed to someone who is ill or contagious. Those who are having symptoms or have been exposed will be sent to another facility for medical observation and/or treatment. Those who are symptom-free and have not had any known exposure will get a card that is their permission slip to obtain medication at the mass dispensing site.

What happens at the mass dispensing site? After triage each person will be given a consent form to read and sign. Information will also be provided about the disease and immunization or medication that will be given. A nurse will then review the form. Then, if there are no contraindications, the immunization or medication will be given to the individual. At the end of the process residents will be given post-treatment educational information and will be allowed to return home.

Could I drive to the mass dispensing site myself? YES. Each person/household will be asked to provide their own transportation to the mass dispensing clinic they have been assigned to. Upon arrival there will be signs and security staff to direct you to parking and then to triage.

What kind of preparations have been made for a mass dispensing clinic situation? For the last four years local public health, emergency management, law enforcement, cities, hospitals, clinics, schools and other community organizations have been working together to assure that there will be an organized response to any disease outbreak or other kind of disaster such as a tornado or flood.