



Eastern
Pennsylvania
Conference
Of The
United
Methodist
Church

DISASTER
RESPONSE MINISTRY

PANDEMIC FLU

Guidelines For Protecting Your Congregation Before & During An Outbreak

CHURCH CONSIDERATIONS

Sunday School

- Make sure all areas are frequently cleaned with sanitizing wipes.
- Use alcohol-based hand rubs regularly and wash your hands frequently.
- Place tissues around the area for use to cover coughs and sneezes.

Worship

- Discontinue coffee fellowship time between services, after an outbreak occurs.
- Do not use greeters to minimize hand-to-hand communication, after an outbreak occurs. Post a sign at the door with a warm greeting or encouraging scripture.
- Discontinue the use of church bulletins after an outbreak occurs to prevent hand-to-hand contamination. The virus can live up to 8 hours on hard surfaces.
- Use alcohol-based hand rubs before communion elements are prepared or served.
- Record the sermon as a podcast and place it on your church web site. If you do not have a video access, post the sermon as a word document.
- Place daily devotions on the web site to encourage members during this crisis.

Ministries

- Develop volunteer teams that can create care packages for sick members.
- Establish teams that can provide transportation for the delivery of the care packages to infected members to be dropped off at the front door. Care packages should contain only pre-packaged items to prevent further contamination.
- Cancel non-essential face-to-face meetings and trying conference calls during the height of the outbreak and social distancing is required. Communicate through phone calls or emails.
- Establish a phone chain for prayer requests or for those who need support.
- If you have a children's pre-school, follow your local school district for the possibility of school dismissals or temporary closure.

Staff

- Advise all staff to stay home if they are sick until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). They should stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, even if they are using antiviral medicines.
- Encourage all employees who want protection from flu to get vaccinated for seasonal flu. Also encourage employees who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications to get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available.
- Cross-train staff to perform essential functions so that the ministry can continue.
- Select lay members who can back up staff members who become ill and plan ways for essential ministry functions to continue.
- Routinely clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- Do not share phones or computers to prevent further contamination. The virus can live on hard objects up to 8 hours.



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FLU PREVENTION STEPS

- Stay informed of pandemic flu status and public health advice. You can follow the news or check out the following web sites: www.cdc.gov (Centers For Disease Control); www.who.int (World Health Organization) or www.flu.gov
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice). Be sure to wash both sides of the hands, between fingers, under the nails and up to your wrists.
- Hang posters/signs in your facilities reminding members to wash their hands.
- Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and to open the door. Place a trash can near the entrance of the bathroom facilities.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the tissue in a no-touch trash receptacle.
- Sneeze or cough into your elbow, if you do not have a tissue available.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Use alcohol-based hand rubs regularly that contain at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people. Minimize contact with others.
- Avoid crowded areas.
- Talk to your health care provider about vaccination. Consider getting a pneumonia shot to prevent secondary infection if you are over the age of 65 or have a chronic illness such as diabetes or asthma.

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle through eating a balanced diet and getting adequate rest. Be sure to eat a variety of foods, including plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grain products. Also include low-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish, and beans. Drink lots of water and go easy on salt, sugar, alcohol, and saturated fat.

RECOGNIZING SYMPTOMS

- Stay home from work if you have flu-like symptoms for at least 24 hours after your fever (100° F) is gone.
- Keep away from others as much as possible.
- Do not travel except to get medical care or necessities.
- Wear a facemask if you leave the house to cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Contact your health care provider if you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications.
- Watch for emergency warning signs that require urgent medical attention, such as:
 - ___ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - ___ Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
 - ___ Sudden dizziness
 - ___ Confusion
 - ___ Severe or persistent vomiting
 - ___ Flu-like symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink clear fluids to stay hydrated, such as water, broth, sports drinks and electrolyte beverages.
- Minimize contact with other household members.



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How You Can Plan Ahead At Home

You can prepare for an influenza pandemic now. You should know both the magnitude of what can happen during a pandemic outbreak and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. This checklist will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

- Two-week supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.
- Have your emergency contact list updated.
- Fill up your gas tank in case supply lines are impacted.

Examples of Food and Non-perishables

- Ready-to-eat canned foods
 - ___ Meats
 - ___ Fish
 - ___ Fruits
 - ___ Vegetables
 - ___ Beans
 - ___ Soups
- Can opener
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter or nuts
- Dried fruit
- Crackers
- Canned juices
- Fluids with electrolytes
- Bottled water
- Canned or jarred baby food and formula
- Pet food
- Other non-perishable items

Examples of Medical, Health, and Emergency Supplies

- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment
- Soap and water, or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash
- Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Thermometer
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Vitamins
- Fluids with electrolytes
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Portable radio
- Manual can opener
- Garbage bags
- Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers