



# Pandemic Preparedness

Pandemics can cause a lot of illness or death. Large numbers of people get sick at the same time and the entire healthcare system can quickly become overwhelmed. In addition, healthcare workers get sick too. Older adults, young children and people with chronic, long-term health conditions are more likely to get very sick or die. Learn how you can prepare yourself and your family before, during, and after a pandemic occurs.

## Before a Pandemic:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Make sure all adults and children are up to date on vaccinations.
- Identify back-up childcare plans in case schools are closed.
- Check to see if your workplace has a policy in telecommuting.
- If you or anyone in your family has a special healthcare, access, or functional need, enroll in the Rhode Island Special Needs Emergency Registry.

## During a Pandemic:

- Continue washing your hands frequently with soap and warm water, or an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Sneeze or cough into your inner-elbow.
- If you are sick, stay home from work or school.
- Sanitize frequently-touched surfaces like door-knobs, railings, phones, or keyboards.
- Follow recommendations from local, state, and federal officials.
- Follow media or check RIEMA's website for updated information.

## After a Pandemic:

- Continue washing your hands frequently with soap and warm water, or an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Pay attention to updates or recommendations from local, state, or federal officials. Sometimes there is more than one wave of illness during a pandemic.
- Wash and sanitize all bedding and personal items of anyone in your house who was sick.
- Continue to sanitize frequently-touched surfaces like doorknobs, railings, phones, or keyboards.
- Continue to take antibiotics you were prescribed until they are all gone. Do not stop taking medicines, even if you feel better.

## Resources:

- For more information on the flu, visit [health.ri.gov/flu](http://health.ri.gov/flu)
- For Travel Health Notices and to learn what vaccinations are needed when traveling to a specific country, visit [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel)