



spotlight on health

Preparing For The Next Public Health Emergency

(NAPSA)—Educating Americans about what they can do to prepare for a crisis is invaluable to protecting the health and safety of our communities.

Despite the growing threat of a natural or man-made disaster, only a small percentage of Americans have emergency plans in place. A February 2007 survey conducted by the American Public Health Association (APHA) noted that only 27 percent of the public has a three-day supply of water, food and medicine and a reliable first-aid kit.

For some of the nation's most vulnerable populations—including mothers with young children, hourly wage workers and individuals with chronic health conditions—being prepared is an even bigger challenge.

No one can predict where the next natural disaster, major storm, disease outbreak or other emergency will strike, but when it does, it is likely to disrupt basic services, leaving people without electricity, water, food or needed medications.

It is not hard to be prepared. APHA has compiled a checklist of simple steps people can take to get ready for most emergency situations. Be sure to have:

- At least a three-day supply of fresh drinking water (one gallon per person per day, plus extra water for pets);
- At least a three-day supply of nonperishable foods that takes into consideration any special dietary needs, infants or pets (e.g., canned goods, protein bars, dried cereal and baby formula);
- A first-aid kit;



Planning ahead and stocking up on supplies is important for weathering an emergency.

- An emergency-response kit that includes a local map, flashlight, can opener, battery-operated radio, batteries, matches, utility knife, blanket, latex gloves, hand sanitizer and extra clothing;
- An emergency supply of over-the-counter and/or prescription medications and medical treatment equipment;
- Awareness of the potential hazards in your area (e.g., hurricanes, chemical spills, extreme heat, heavy snowfalls);
- A designated emergency contact person and place for everyone to meet outside of the home in the event of a disaster;
- An established plan for how you would evacuate your home; and
- Awareness of your community's emergency response plan and where to get up-to-date information.

For additional information on protecting yourself and your family in an emergency, visit the Web site at www.nphw.org.