



Protecting Communities from Disease Outbreaks and Bioterrorism

If there is a bioterrorism attack or major disease outbreak, people may need emergency medicines quickly so that they do not get sick. Federal, state, and local governments are working together to make sure that communities will have access to these medicines if they need them.

How is the government working to make sure there are enough medicines for my community during an emergency?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed a Strategic National Stockpile or SNS. The SNS has large amounts of medicine and medical supplies to protect the American public if there is a public health emergency (such as a terrorist attack or disease outbreak) that is severe enough to cause local supplies to run out. Once Federal and local authorities decide that the medicines from the SNS are needed, they can be delivered to any state in the U.S. within 12 hours. Each state has plans to receive and give out SNS medicines and medical supplies to local communities as quickly as possible.

What do I need to know about SNS medicines?

- The medicine in the SNS is free for everyone
- The SNS has enough medicine to protect people in several large cities at the same time

How will SNS medicines be given out?

One of the ways that many communities are planning to give out medicines is at a point of dispensing. A point of dispensing (POD) is a place where a vaccine, antibiotic or other medicine is quickly given to a large group of people. Most people will go to a community POD. A public or community POD is a POD run by the local health department and is open to the entire public. You may also go to a POD run by your employer or other group in your community.

How will I know which POD to go to?

During an emergency, your local health department will work with the media and community leaders to let you know how to find your local POD.

- Listen to local news reports to find out when the PODs will be open
- Visit your local health department's website to find out where your local POD is
- PODs will most likely be at a school or meeting hall



What can I expect when the POD is opened?

You will be told before you go to the POD what to bring with you. You may be asked to bring photo identification such as a driver's license or passport. You may also be asked to bring information about your medical history or your family member's medical history to the POD. If you are asked to send one person per household to the POD, you will need to have this medical information. The best thing to do is to write down information for each member of your family who lives with you, and keep it in a safe place so that you can find it in an emergency.

The information includes:

- Allergies you or your family members have
- Medicines you or your family members are taking
- Serious illnesses you or your family members have
- If you have children, their age and weight

When you get to the POD, you will probably have to wait in line to get medicine. The people working there will be able to help you find out what to do. After you get your medicine and go home, listen to local news reports for information on the emergency and anything else you need to do. If you are given medicine to take at home, it will be very important to follow the directions you are given for taking the medicine. Some medicines may need to be taken for several days or weeks to keep you from getting sick. They will only work properly if you follow the **exact** directions for taking them that you are given at the POD.

What will I get at the POD?

- Medicine (pills, shots) that you need to keep you from getting sick
- Information on the medicine, how to take it, how long to take it, and any side effects to watch for.

Where can I learn more about planning for disease outbreaks, bioterrorism, and emergency medicines?

- **CDC's Public Health Preparedness Website:** This site has information on the types of disease and bioterrorism agents that might lead to the use of emergency medicines:
<http://emergency.cdc.gov>
- **CDC's Strategic National Stockpile Website:** Here you can learn more about the Strategic National Stockpile and how the government is planning to keep you safe during emergencies:
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/stockpile/#material>



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*The purpose of this newsletter is to provide preparedness information to members of the community.
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