

# JUST IN CASE...

BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY



An Emergency Readiness  
Planning Guide for People  
who May Need Extra  
Assistance



**W**e may not like to think about it but emergencies and disasters do happen. Here in Vermont, we face weather emergencies like ice storms and flooding, disease outbreaks such as the flu, and manmade disasters like hazardous waste spills. It's simply common sense to be ready for these events.

### **Why prepare?**

Emergencies and disasters can strike suddenly, without warning. An emergency can force you to evacuate your neighborhood, or confine you to your home. During a disaster, you may not have access to your grocery store, drug store or hospital. Emergency responders like firefighters and police will not be able to reach everyone at once. You need to be able to survive on your own, perhaps for several days.

Planning ahead for an emergency is the best way to protect yourself. If you have a medical, physical or sensory disability, planning for emergencies is even more important. If you are prepared, you'll be able to cope when disaster strikes—you will be safer, more comfortable and calmer during the crisis.

### **What is the purpose of this booklet?**

This booklet offers practical tips and guidance on how to stay safe during an emergency. It is written especially for people with special needs, and will help you to:

- think about what you will need during an emergency.
- identify a support team and put together an emergency contact list.

- prepare to be safe in your home, if it's not possible to get out for a few days.
- be ready to leave your home (evacuate) if you need to.

### **Getting Ready—One Step at a Time**

Preparing for emergencies may seem overwhelming. But you don't need to do everything at once! You can plan for emergencies a little at a time, using the *Focus Sheets* included in this booklet. Each *Focus Sheet* listed below focuses on one part of emergency planning and gives you specific steps to follow.

- 1 Getting Started:** Easy First Steps
- 2 Staying Connected:** Your Support Team and Emergency Contacts
- 3 When the Lights Go Out:** Planning for a Power Failure
- 4 If You Need to Stay Home:** Have Your Emergency Supplies in Place
- 5 If You Need to Go:** Planning for Evacuation
- 6 Your Medicines:** Don't Forget Them!
- 7 Man's Best Friend:** Emergency Planning for Service Animals and Pets
- 8 Here Comes the Flu:** How to Protect Yourself

Try working through one *Focus Sheet* each month for the next few months. Ask a family member or your home health aide or case manager to help you.

If you take it one step at a time you CAN be ready, just in case... And knowing that you are prepared for an emergency can make you feel safer every day.



## GETTING STARTED: EASY FIRST STEPS

JUST IN CASE ... BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

**E**very journey begins with a single step. Once you take that first step, it's easier to keep going. Don't put it off. Start today with *Focus Sheet 1*. Next month you can take a few more strides guided by *Focus Sheet 2*, and so on.

Here are some easy first steps to get you started on the road to emergency readiness:

### ■ **Start talking about it!**

Let the people in your life know that you are starting to plan for emergency situations that might occur. Talk to family members and other caregivers about past emergencies or what might happen in the future. Ask for their help and advice in thinking things through.

### ■ **Fill out an *Emergency Health Information Sheet*.**

This sheet tells rescuers what they need to know about you if they find you unconscious or dazed, or if they need to help evacuate you quickly. (See the back of this page for a form you can use).

- ❖ Work with a family member or your home health aide to fill out the *Emergency Health Information Sheet*.
  - ❖ Attach a current photo of yourself to the sheet.
  - ❖ Put copies of this sheet in your wallet or purse, in your car glove box, and in your wheelchair, if you have one.
  - ❖ Give a copy to a neighbor or a family member who lives nearby.
  - ❖ Keep a copy at your workplace or other program where you spend a lot of time.
- ### ■ **Get flashlights for your home and car.**
- ❖ Put one by your bed and another in the kitchen. Keep extra batteries on hand – be sure they are the right size.
- ### ■ **Be sure to always wear your medical alert bracelet or tag.**



# My Emergency Health Information

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health Insurance:  Medicare  Medicaid  Private: \_\_\_\_\_  Uninsured  
Member #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Language Spoken at Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Blood Type: \_\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact 1, Name & Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact 2, Name & Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Physician Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Case Manager or Home Health Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pharmacy Name and Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Transportation Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## HEALTH CONDITIONS AND DISABILITIES

Major Health Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
Disabilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cognitive impairments (like dementia or memory problems): \_\_\_\_\_  
Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Medications: *(For more info see My Medication List in my wallet/purse)* \_\_\_\_\_

## SPECIAL EQUIPMENT USED *(List model and make if possible)*

Medical Devices: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobility Aids: \_\_\_\_\_  
Communication Devices: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Adaptive Equipment: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I wear glasses or contact lenses  I wear a hearing aid

## ASSISTANCE I MAY NEED IN AN EMERGENCY

I need specific help with:  standing  walking  getting around  eating  dressing  
 transferring  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
Tips for how best to help me:

## BEST WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH ME *(For people with a communication disability)*



## STAYING CONNECTED: YOUR SUPPORT TEAM & EMERGENCY CONTACTS

JUST IN CASE... BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

**I**n an emergency, rescue workers will not be able to reach everyone right away. Most likely, nearby neighbors, family or friends will be the first people who can offer you help. It is important to plan ahead of time who you can call upon and who may be most able to assist you in an emergency.

Here are some steps you can take to connect quickly with people when disaster strikes:

### ■ **Identify your “Support Team”.**

These are people who agree to check in on you and help you in an emergency. People you could ask to take on this role include your home health aide, a neighbor you know well, a friend or family member who lives near you. It is important to have at least two people on your ‘team’ in case one of them can’t get through to you. Talk to these people about your emergency plans.

### ■ **Make your *Emergency Contact List*.**

People who should be on your list include your support team, other family members, your doctors, your pharmacy, agencies you

receive services from, and other emergency numbers. (*See the back of this page for a form you can use*).

- ❖ Post this list next to each phone in your house.
- ❖ Put copies of this list in your wallet or purse, in your car glove box, and in your wheelchair, if you have one.
- ❖ Give a copy to a neighbor or a family member who lives nearby.
- ❖ Keep a copy at your workplace or other program where you spend a lot of time.

### ■ **Enter emergency contact phone numbers in your cell phone.**

But don’t rely *only* on your cell phone for these numbers—your phone may get lost or run out of power. It’s very important to keep a paper list of emergency contacts.

- **Get a back-up battery for your cell phone,** or a charger cord that you can use in your car to charge your cell phone, if your home power is out.

# My Emergency Contact List

**My name** \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in this list now, so if an emergency happens, you will have all the phone numbers you need in one place. You can include more than one phone number for each person—just note whether the number is for home, office or cell phone. You may also want to include email addresses if you have them. Make copies of this list and put them in your wallet or purse, your car, at work, etc.

<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>NAME AND PHONE NUMBER</b>
Family Member(s)	1) 2) 3)
Out-of-state Family Member	
Neighbor(s)	1) 2)
My Doctor(s)	1) 2)
My Case Manager My Home Health Nurse/Health Aide Home Health Agency/VNA	1) 2) 3)
Main Pharmacy Back-up Pharmacy	1) 2)
Hospital	
Veterinarian	
Other Emergency Numbers (for example, Poison Control, Power Outage Line, etc.)	1) 2) 3)



# WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT: PLANNING FOR A POWER FAILURE

JUST IN CASE... BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

**A**lmost everyone in Vermont has lived through a power outage. Usually the lights come back on in a few hours, but in some emergency situations your electricity could be out for days. People who depend on electric-powered medical or assistive devices must plan ahead to make sure they can tap into back-up power sources right away.

Here are some steps you can take to ensure that your equipment keeps working for you during an extended power outage:

■ **Call the company that made your equipment and ask about alternative power sources** that can keep your equipment running for 5-7 days.

- ❖ Ask about: whether and how you can charge your equipment using your car battery; whether there is manually operated equipment you can use if needed; using a generator to power your equipment.
- ❖ Discuss what you find out with your health care provider and home health aide.

- **Have extra batteries for all your equipment on hand.**
- **If possible, have manual (non-electric) versions of important equipment** (for example, a manual wheelchair).
- **List all electric-powered medical devices and adaptive equipment on your *Emergency Health Information Sheet*.** (See *Focus Sheet 1*).
- **Put a laminated instruction card on your equipment.** This card should explain how to operate your equipment, move it safely and install a new battery. This will help emergency responders to keep your equipment running if you cannot. (See the back of this page for a card you can use).
- **Get yourself a battery-operated radio or TV, and extra batteries.**
- **If you own a generator for use in a power outage, be sure you know how to operate it safely.**
- **Be prepared to leave your home (evacuate) in case your back-up power sources fail.** (See *Focus Sheet 5*).



# Instruction Cards for Medical Devices or Adaptive Equipment

## HOW TO OPERATE THIS DEVICE

### THIS EQUIPMENT BELONGS TO

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

My support person who knows to operate this equipment (*name & phone number*):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### EQUIPMENT DESCRIPTION

What it is/what it does: \_\_\_\_\_

Manufacturer and Model: \_\_\_\_\_

Serial Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number for Help/Service: \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTRUCTIONS

How to install a battery:

Where to find my spare batteries:

Operating instructions:

How to move my equipment safely:







## IF YOU NEED TO STAY HOME: HAVE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES IN PLACE

JUST IN CASE... BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

**S**ome emergencies, like a blizzard or a flu epidemic, may confine you to your home for days. You may have little warning, so it's important to have basic survival supplies on hand.

Here are some steps you can take to be sure you have what you need to stay safe and comfortable in your home:

- **Plan how you will keep informed.**
  - ❖ Tune in to your local TV or radio station for emergency alerts, information and updates.
  - ❖ Check the website of Vermont Emergency Management: [www.vermont.com](http://www.vermont.com)
- **Plan what you will do if your water is cut off.**
  - ❖ Your in-home emergency supplies should include water for drinking, and supplies for sanitation needs.
  - ❖ If you think that your power may go down, fill your tub with tap water for flushing the toilet and for cleaning.
- **Plan what you will do if your electricity goes out.** (See *Focus Sheet 3*).
- **Plan what you will do if you have no heat.**
  - ❖ When the heat goes off, put on warm clothes including hat and gloves.
  - ❖ If your house is too cold, you may need to leave and go to a place that has heat (like a family member's home or a shelter).
  - ❖ CAUTION! *Never* use generators, grills or camp stoves indoors. They give off carbon monoxide, a deadly gas you cannot see or smell.
- **Gather together your in-home emergency supplies.** (See the back of this page for a checklist).
  - ❖ Your in-home emergency supplies should include not only food and water, but medical supplies, sanitation supplies, and everything you need to stay informed, stay warm, and stay calm.
  - ❖ This takes some time and effort, but you already have many of these things in your home. For your other supplies, collect them a few at a time. You don't have to do it all at once.

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# In-Home Emergency Supplies Checklist

*Gather supplies gradually. Buy a few extra food items each month until you have enough. Store supplies in a dry, cool place. Use food before it expires and replace what you use.*

## Food and Water

- Water: 1 gallon per person per day
- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables, juices and soups
- High energy foods—peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Comfort foods: Cookies, hard candy, instant coffee, tea bags
- Special diet foods if needed

## Tools

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Battery operated radio or TV
- Manual can opener
- ABC-type fire extinguisher
- Shut-off wrench to turn off household gas or water if necessary
- Matches in waterproof container

## First Aid Kit and Medicines

- Non-prescription medicines like pain relievers, stomach remedies, etc.
- Extra prescription medicines  
*(if possible, See Focus Sheet 6)*
- First Aid Kit and manual

## Special Needs Supply List (as needed)

- Extra batteries for wheelchair, medical equipment, hearing aids, etc.
- Wheelchair patch kit
- Gloves for manual wheelchair
- Preprinted key phrases you would use in an emergency
- Extra medical supplies like dressing materials, catheters, cannulas, syringes

## Sanitation Supplies

- Toilet paper and feminine hygiene products
- Soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectant
- Plastic garbage bags and plastic bucket with tight lid

## Other Important Items

- Books, cards, games  
*(to keep you occupied and calm)*
- Extra eyeglasses



## IF YOU NEED TO GO: PLANNING FOR EVACUATION

JUST IN CASE... BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

**I**n a disaster such as a flood or fire, you may have to leave your home quickly. It's important to think ahead of time about where you could go, how you will get there, and what you will need to take with you.

Here are some steps you can take to be ready if you need to leave your home:

- **Know all the exit routes from your home.**
- **Plan where you might go.**
  - ❖ The first and best choice is a family member's or friend's home. Talk with people who could take you in during an emergency. If possible, have one nearby place to go and another that is out of state.
  - ❖ Another option is an emergency shelter. Be aware however that many shelters cannot accommodate people with special needs. Call **211** for a list of shelters in your area.
- **Listen for evacuation orders on your radio or TV.**

In a widespread disaster like a hurricane or flood, officials will use TV and radio to tell people whether they should evacuate, and to give evacuation instructions.
- **If you can drive yourself, plan to leave as soon as you hear an evacuation order.**
- **If you cannot drive yourself, think about who can provide you emergency transportation.**
  - ❖ If you normally use public or Medicaid transportation, be aware that these may NOT be available during an emergency.
  - ❖ Make arrangements ahead of time with several family members, neighbors or friends who could give you a ride in an emergency.
- **Make a "Go Kit"** of supplies you will need to live away from home for a short period of time. *(See the back of this page for a checklist).*

# Evacuation Supplies Checklist

## GO KIT CHECKLIST

*Pack these supplies in a sturdy duffle bag or plastic storage box. Pack a set of supplies for each person in your household. Don't make your Go Kit too heavy.*

- |                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change of clothing and shoes              | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra eyeglasses                                                                                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal care products (toothbrush, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight and batteries                                                                                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of <i>Emergency Information Sheet and Emergency Contact List</i>                                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Towel                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of important documents (birth certificate, driver's license, passports, bank account and insurance information, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepaid phone card                        |                                                                                                                                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket or sleeping bag                   |                                                                                                                                                       |

***Put a sign on your Go Kit that says "Don't Forget Your Medications!"***

***Add any special needs items like preprinted phrase cards, spare batteries for equipment, special medical supplies, or a favorite item to help you keep calm.***

## Emergency Supplies to Keep in Your Car

- |                                                     |                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bottled Water              | <input type="checkbox"/> Distress flag                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket/reflective blanket | <input type="checkbox"/> Fix-a-flat                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Granola bars/energy bars   | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight & extra batteries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jumper cables              | <input type="checkbox"/> Flares                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit              | <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare tire and jack        |                                                       |

**Keep your gas tank over half full. Consider storing your Go Kit in the trunk of your car.**



## YOUR MEDICINES: DON'T FORGET THEM!

JUST IN CASE... BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

**J**ust as you need food, water and shelter in an emergency, you need to have your medicines available, too. The best way to be prepared is to have a good, up-to-date list of your medicines. A medication list helps you remember all the medicines you take. It also tells doctors and emergency responders what medicines you take and why, so they can be sure you get what you need.

Here are the steps you can take to be sure you will have the right medicines available in an emergency:

- **Write down a list of your current medications and always carry it with you.** *(See the back of this page for a list you can fill in).*
  - ❖ You can start the list on your own, and check it with your doctor or home health nurse, next time you have an appointment.
  - ❖ Be sure to list ALL the medicines you take including prescription and non-prescription medicines.
  - ❖ Update your list with your doctor at every appointment.
- **Be prepared to take your medicines with you if you need to evacuate.**
  - ❖ This includes any extra supplies that you use to take medicines (like catheters or syringes).
  - ❖ Put a reminder sign on your Go Kit: ***Don't Forget Your Meds!***
- **Find a back-up pharmacy you can call to get prescriptions filled,** in case yours is closed or runs out of medicine.
  - ❖ Try to find one located some distance from your main pharmacy, perhaps in a nearby town.
  - ❖ Put the phone number of your back-up pharmacy on your Emergency Contact List.
- **Try to keep at least a week's worth of your medicines on hand at all times.**

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# My Medication List

- List ALL the medicines you take, including medicines prescribed by a doctor, over-the-counter medicines (no prescription needed) like cold medicines or vitamins, and herbal remedies (like St. John’s Wort or ginseng).
- Keep this list with you in your wallet or purse.
- Show it to your doctors, pharmacists, nurses and dentist, and keep it up to date.

**Allergies to**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birth Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **to Medication:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Doctor (name and phone #):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferred Pharmacy (name and phone #):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Back-up Pharmacy (name and phone #):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact #1 (name and phone #):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact #2 (name and phone #):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date I completed this form:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Medicine	What I Take It For	How Much I Take	When I Take It (what times of day or “as needed”)	Comments (for example, special storage instructions)



# MAN'S BEST FRIEND: EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR SERVICE ANIMALS AND PETS

JUST IN CASE... BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

**I**f you have a service animal or a pet, your emergency plans must include them. Being prepared with a plan and supplies for your animal can save their life.

Here are some steps you can take to keep your animal safe:

- **Make sure your animal has an ID tag.**

The tag should list the animal's name, your phone number, and if possible, the number of another person who can care for your animal. Dogs and cats should wear this tag on their collar, along with their license tags and tags for shots. For other kinds of animals, put the ID tag on their cage or carrier.

- **Make an emergency supplies kit for your animal.** *(See the back of this page for a checklist).*

Whether you are stuck at home or you have to evacuate, you can use these supplies to take care of your animal until things get back to normal.

- **Plan to take your animal with you if you have to evacuate.**

This means you need to think about where you can go—a place that will welcome both you and your animal. Be aware that most emergency shelters will not allow pets; some shelters allow service animals.

- **Make a list of who can take care of your animal, if you cannot.**

Some possible places include: friends or family members, boarding kennels, and animal shelters. Call these places to be sure they would be able to take your animal in an emergency.

- **Find an animal care buddy** in case the emergency happens at a time when you are not at home. The best animal care buddy is a nearby neighbor.

- **Talk with your vet about your emergency plans for your animal,** next time you go in for a vet visit. Your vet may have good ideas to make your plans even better.

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## Checklist: Emergency Supplies for Your Pet or Service Animal

**Gather** supplies and put them in a sturdy container or cloth bag with handles.

**Label** the container with your animal's name, your phone number and your vet's phone number. **Put** the container in a safe place where you can get it in a hurry if you need to.

- |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food (a week's supply)                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal First Aid Kit (See below for contents)                                                                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food and water bowls/water bottles                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Current photo of you and your animal together (in case your animal gets separated from you)                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manual can opener                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Sheet with your animal's name and care instructions (in case someone else needs to care for your animal for a while) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leash and/or harness (for dogs)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Bedding                                                                                                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrier (for cats or other small animals)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Toys                                                                                                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter pan and litter (for cats)                           |                                                                                                                                                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bags and paper towels (for cleaning up waste)      |                                                                                                                                                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your animal's medicines (labeled with phone number of vet) |                                                                                                                                                           |

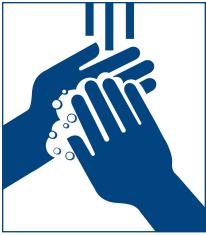
*Don't make your supply kit too heavy.*

### What to Put in Your Animal First Aid Kit

- |                                                   |                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bandage rolls and tape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rubbing alcohol       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small scissors           | <input type="checkbox"/> Saline solution       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antibiotic ointment      | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal first aid book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flea and tick prevention |                                                |

Put it all in a plastic box with a lid. Label the box with your animal's name, your phone number and your vet's phone number.





# HERE COMES THE FLU: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

JUST IN CASE... BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

**I**nfluenza, known as “flu”, is a serious disease of the nose, throat and lungs. The flu is caused by a virus that passes easily from one person to another by coughing and sneezing. Most people recover from the flu in a week or two, but children, older people and people with chronic health problems can develop pneumonia and even die from flu.

Normally, the flu comes around every year—this is called “seasonal flu.” Rarely, as happened in 2009 and 2010, a new flu emerges that may cause a worldwide outbreak. This is called “pandemic flu”.

Here are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself and others from the flu, both seasonal flu and pandemic flu.

■ **Wash your hands often.**

Use soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wash hands *before* cooking and eating. Wash hands *after* using the bathroom, coughing or sneezing, or touching things that may carry germs, like trash, raw food, or a person’s cuts or sores.

■ **Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.**

Use a tissue and throw the used tissue in the trash. Or cough into your elbow or upper arm—NOT your hand.

■ **Get a flu shot every year.** *(See the back of this page for more information about flu shots).*

A flu shot (vaccination) is the best protection against the flu. Doctor’s offices, drug stores and town clinics offer flu shots every year, starting in the Fall.

■ **Be prepared to stay at home if there is a lot of flu in your community.** *(See Focus Sheet 4).*

■ **If you have flu symptoms, call your doctor.**

■ **Stay at home if you are sick,** so you don’t spread the flu to others.

### Symptoms of Flu

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Feeling very tired
- Headache and body aches
- Runny or stuffy nose

And sometimes, stomach symptoms, like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

# Flu Vaccine Facts & Myths

*From the Vermont Department of Health  
<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/flu/myths.aspx>*

**Myth: The flu isn't a serious disease.**

**Fact:** Influenza is a serious disease of the nose, throat and lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 200,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are 65 years and older. But small children less than two years old are as likely as those over 65 to go to the hospital because of the flu.

**Myth: The flu shot can cause the flu.**

**Fact:** The flu shot cannot cause the flu. Some people get a little soreness or redness where they get the shot. It goes away in a day or two. Serious problems from the flu shot are very rare.

**Myth: The flu shot does not work.**

**Fact:** Most of the time the flu shot will prevent the flu. In scientific studies, the effectiveness of the flu shot has ranged from 70 percent to 80 percent when there is a good match between circulating viruses and those in the vaccine. Getting the vaccine is your best protection against this disease.

**Myth: The side effects are worse than the flu.**

**Fact:** The worst side effect you are likely to get from the shot is a sore arm. The nasal mist flu vaccine might cause nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat and cough. The risk of a severe allergic reaction is less than one in four million.

**Myth: Only older people need a flu vaccine.**

**Fact:** Adults and children with conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease need to get a flu shot.

**Myth: You must get the flu vaccine before December.**

**Fact:** Flu vaccine can be given before or during the flu season. The best time to get vaccinated is October or November, but you can get vaccinated in December or later.

**For more information call your health care provider or email your questions to:**

***[flu@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:flu@vdh.state.vt.us)***



## COMMUNICATION TIPS: GIVING AND RECEIVING INFORMATION DURING AN EMERGENCY

**W**hen emergency responders arrive, you may need to give them instructions on how best to help you.

You also should think about how you will stay informed—how you will receive information about what is happening with the emergency.

Here are some communication tips:

**Practice giving information quickly and clearly to people who do not know you**, using as few words as possible.

For example:

- *“Take my manual wheelchair. It’s in the front hall closet.”*
- *“The best way to carry me is....”*
- *“You can find my Emergency Medical Information Sheet in the right, top desk drawer in the bedroom.”*

**If you have trouble communicating, consider making preprinted cards to use.**

For example:

- *“I communicate using an assistive communication device. You will find it on the dining room table.”*
- *“I cannot speak. I can point to simple pictures and key words. You will find a communication sheet in my wallet.”*

**If you are vision-impaired, deaf or hard-of-hearing, plan how you will find out what is happening.**

- Plan ahead for someone to pass on important emergency information to you if you cannot use a TV or radio.
- Find out about new technologies, like text radio, that can help you in receiving emergency warnings and instructions.
- Keep extra batteries on hand for visual or sensory alarms, pagers and TTY.

# For More Information

- **Vermont Emergency Management Agency**  
*www.dps.state.vt.us/vem*
- **Vermont Department of Health flu information**  
*www.healthvermont.gov/prevent/flu*
- **American Red Cross**  
*www.redcross.org*
- **Ready.gov – a website of the Federal Emergency Management Agency**  
*www.ready.gov*
- **Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and People with Disabilities**  
*www.disabilitypreparedness.org*

## Important Phone Numbers

*For immediate assistance:*

**CALL 911**

*For questions about health and human service organizations in your community, and other resources to help with planning for emergencies:*

**CALL 211**

*For information on road closures:*

**CALL 511**

**To print out a copy of this booklet or any of the focus sheets go to:**

*<http://dail.vermont.gov>*

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