



**American
Red Cross**

Cape Cod and Islands Chapter

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Media Alert
MEDIA ALERT

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American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter Offers Flu Checklist

Hyannis, Mass, September 19, 2009 - The American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter, is encouraging the public to be prepared for flu season. A flu checklist is now available, which provides information about the different types of flu, gives tips for avoiding the flu, lists common symptoms of the flu and suggests steps to take if someone you know becomes infected with the flu.

The federal government estimates that as many as 40 percent of the country's population could become ill with the flu this fall and winter. The H1N1 (swine flu) virus is a potentially serious health issue for families, schools and businesses across the country and the world. While the government is uncertain how widespread or severe the H1N1 flu virus will be this year, there are simple things people can do right now to prepare for it.

Parents should review flu plans at their children's schools and day care centers. Employees should ask about work policies on tele-working or staying home when a relative is sick with the flu or a child's school is closed.

The American Red Cross recommends that people follow common sense public health practices and store extra supplies. These steps are helpful for both the H1N1 virus and the seasonal flu virus each year:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Minimize contact with people who are sick as much as possible, and stay home when you are sick.

Get flu shots for both seasonal flu and H1N1. Get the seasonal flu shot early. Groups at the highest risk for contracting H1N1 should get vaccinated as soon as shots become available.

Stock your home with extra food, water and supplies to reduce the need to go out in public when taking care of a sick loved one or if schools and businesses have temporarily closed due to widespread outbreak. The Red Cross recommends storing the following supplies: a two-week supply of food, water, prescription and non-prescription medications, and health and cleaning supplies such as soap, tissues, thermometers, bleach and hand sanitizer. Water should be in clean plastic containers and hold a gallon of water per person per day. Household preparation steps should also include baby supplies, food for special nutritional needs, copies of important personal documents, extra pet food and cash.

During a flu outbreak the Red Cross remains committed to its core services of maintaining a safe blood supply, educating the public on preparedness, and providing disaster relief to those in need.

For more information on how to be prepared for flu season or for volunteer opportunities, visit capecodandislandsredcross.org or call toll-free (508) 775-1540 or (866) 762-1928. You can also write to: American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter, 286 South Street, Hyannis MA 02601.

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