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Be COVID Prepared

Natural disasters are common in the Midwest. We know it's smart to be prepared before the worst happens. But do you know that those same preparedness steps can apply right now to another type of hazard? The answer is YES. And the hazard is COVID-19.

So what can YOU do to **Be COVID Prepared?** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) say it can be as easy as following 3 simple principles: Prevent. Prepare. Be Informed.



Prevent:

The ideal situation is to **PREVENT** becoming sick with COVID-19 to begin with. We've already seen the serious consequences that can result from coronavirus infections. So, it's important to avoid getting infected in the first place – to protect yourself, your family, your friends and those you care about.

By practicing three simple things (the 3 Ws), you can substantially increase your chances of staying well:

1. **WEAR** a mask.
2. **WATCH** your distance (6+ feet from others).
3. **WASH** your hands and common surfaces frequently.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC), the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. This is a disease that can be transmitted through the air (coughing, sneezing, laughing, singing, talking loudly) and potentially other ways.

It's important to know that COVID-19 can be spread by people who are not experiencing or showing any symptoms. So that's why regular precautions **all day, every day**, are so essential.

For more information about what to do if you're sick, see this link from the CDC: [CDC: What to Do if You are Sick](#). For COVID-19 prevention information in a college setting, see this CDC link: [CDC: Back-to-College Tips for Students](#)



Prepare:

Let's say you've done everything you can to stay well but inadvertently, you become sick or exposed to someone who is sick or presumed COVID positive. What then? What do you do? Where do you go?

You definitely don't want to be caught off guard in this scenario. Instead, you want to be prepared – in advance. Here are 3 ways to do just that:

Have a plan

Now (while you're healthy) is the time to think through the steps you may need to take if you become ill or need to isolate, or quarantine because of a COVID-19 exposure or diagnosis. And, to make a plan.

*Note: According to the CDC, **isolation** means separating sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick, even in their own home. **Quarantining** means restricting the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.*

Here are some questions to ask yourself and some solutions to consider:

- How and where will you isolate or quarantine if you are sick or exposed to someone who is sick?

- What will you take with you if you need to temporarily relocate in order to isolate or quarantine?
- How will you eat? Will you have access to on-campus dining, take-out food, or a kitchen with a refrigerator or microwave?
- How will you move yourself and your things to a temporary location? Do you have, or need transportation?
- What if you have a disability? Do you need special arrangements, equipment or help to relocate?
- Will you have access to laundry facilities at your temporary location?
- Can you continue classes during an isolation or quarantine period, which is typically about 10-14 days? If so, how?
- How will you stay in touch with others while you are isolated?

Solutions:

Become familiar with the process your college or university has developed if you are exposed to COVID-19 or become sick yourself.

- Find out who you should notify if you are sick and if there is testing available, to include any associated cost.
- Determine if you can stay on campus. If you live off campus, can you move into student housing set aside for positive or suspected COVID-19 cases or do you need to stay where you are?
- Plan your transportation mode if you don't have your own vehicle. If you are sick or exposed to someone who is sick, do NOT use public transportation such as buses or ride-shares such as taxis or Uber because doing so could potentially infect others.
- Know what options are in place to continue classes virtually or online.

Put your plan in writing to help keep your steps organized and make it easier to add information as you think about it. You can use a pen and pad, computer, iPad or cell phone. It doesn't have to be fancy. Just capture your plan in a way that hits the high points and makes sense to you. For a sample plan you can fill out, see the **Be Informed** section below.

Share the plan in advance with at least one other person so they know what you will be doing and how to help, if needed.

Make a Kit

It's always a good idea to make an emergency preparedness kit to help yourself in the event of a disaster. A kit is supposed to help sustain you for a period of time if you need to evacuate or relocate because of an emergency of any type or size. The same is true for COVID-19. It's just another type of emergency.

So, what's in a kit? That depends somewhat on your individual situation but in general, you want the following items: Extra clothing, food, water, medicine, toiletries, first-aid supplies, flashlight and batteries, a weather radio, supplies for a pet or child if you have one.

For COVID, you want to add some extra items such as masks (cloth or disposable so you can wear at least one fresh one every day), hand sanitizer, EPA-approved disinfecting wipes to clean common surfaces, disposable gloves and a digital thermometer so you can regularly take your temperature to detect a possible fever, one of the COVID-19 symptoms.

Here are some questions to ask yourself about making a kit and some solutions to consider:

- What do you want/need to take with you if you have to temporarily relocate for 14 days or more?
- What do you already have on hand?
- What do you need to buy?
- Do you have key phone numbers and financial information to take along if you have to relocate on short notice?
- If you have a short-term or permanent disability, do you need anything special or extra in your kit?

Solutions:

Build a COVID kit that can sustain you for at least 10-14 days. Include the appropriate amount of clothing, depending on whether you have access to laundry facilities. If possible, include towels, pillow(s) and a change of bedding.

Determine the food you'll need. Include comfort-food items.

Buy what you can in advance and store it in something you can pick up and take with you such as tote bags, backpacks or a plastic tub. Include bottled water and/or fluid replacements such as juice or drinks with electrolytes.

Procure any medicine you may need, including prescriptions and over-the-counter items such as pain relievers, allergy medicines and antacids.

Add **COVID-related items** such as masks (cloth or disposable so you can wear at least one fresh one every day), hand sanitizer, EPA-approved disinfecting wipes to clean common surfaces and, if possible, disposable gloves.



Add basic first-aid items such as bandages, disinfecting treatments, antibacterial ointment, digital thermometer, gauze, an elastic bandage, soap and washcloth.

Make a call list of important people and phone numbers. Include key contacts such as family members, friends, medical professionals (doctors, dentists, pharmacists), your health insurance agent, your bank, any institution through which you may have a loan and credit card companies. Include account numbers as appropriate.

Be tech savvy. Consider purchasing at least one extra battery for your cell phone and/or laptop. Make sure to have a couple of extra charging cords for your key electronics such as your cell phone, iPad and laptop.

Don't forget the school supplies you rely on such as electronics, books, markers, paper, pens, etc. to study and complete course assignments.

Here are three good resources to help with these solutions:

- Fillable card to record key contacts to make your call list: [Contact List - Fillable card](#).
- What's in a communication plan? (English and Spanish): [Family Communication Plan for Parents and Kids](#) (PDF); [Family Communications Plan \(Spanish\)](#) (PDF)
- Making a kit + additional guidance for individuals with disabilities: www.ready.gov/disability

Aim to Sustain

Once you are in an isolation or quarantine status, you want to be able to sustain your daily living under restricted circumstances, especially if you are not feeling well. Hopefully, you already addressed that situation in your plan. But what if you didn't? What happens if your health status changes or you have to stay in isolation or quarantine longer than expected?

Here are some questions to ask yourself about sustainability and some solutions to consider:

- What will you do if you suddenly start feeling sick or showing symptoms?
- Can you stay longer than planned in the place you are temporarily using to isolate or quarantine if needed? What is needed to extend?
- Do you have enough supplies – food, medicine, clothing, school supplies? If not, how do you get more?
- What if you find yourself feeling stressed about the situation?

Solutions:

Know when and how to communicate a change in your health status, particularly if you start exhibiting symptoms you didn't previously have.

- Consult the guidance provided for this situation by your college or university.
- Contact your own physician or the nearest emergency room for direction about how to seek medical treatment. **Important:** Don't show up unannounced. Contact a healthcare provider or facility by phone first because there may be special instructions about how to get medical care without potentially infecting others. **If you are in distress or having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.**
- Know how to get emergency medical care if needed – both when you are on and off campus. If you have to call 9-1-1, be sure to tell the dispatcher that you have, or may have been exposed to COVID-19. This helps protect the first responders who are coming to help you.

Determine in advance if there are **time limits** for your stay in isolation or quarantine. Negotiate a possible extension ahead of time or at least understand what it will take to stay longer, if needed.

Designate one or more safety buddies. This is a person who can regularly check on you to make sure you are OK and/or run errands so you can safely stay in isolation or quarantine.

Learn how to live in your new surroundings. The CDC has 10 tips for managing COVID-19 symptoms wherever you are. See this link for more information:
[CDC: 10 Things to Stay Safe at Home](#)

Reach out for help to care for your emotions. The pandemic is creating new stresses for people of all ages. Know that you're not alone. It's OK to tell someone that you are not OK and to seek some advice or counseling. Talk to a friend. Take advantage of mental health supports on campus and/or within the local community.

Here are some common signs of distress:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

For emotional health tips, see these websites: [CDC Foundation: How Right Now.org](#) and [CDC: Taking Care of Yourself Emotionally](#)

Be Informed



Be Informed: (a.k.a. Know your Stuff)

There are numerous mobile apps and online resources that can provide additional information on COVID-19 and disaster preparedness in general. Here are some links you can use to learn more:

Go Mobile!

- Check out mobile apps provided by your college or university for COVID-19 information.



- Download the free FEMA app for safety tips and @NWS weather alerts for up to five locations: <https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app>.
 - [Download the FEMA App](#) on the App Store for iPhone.
 - [Download the FEMA App](#) on Google Play for Android:
 - Learn about [the FEMA App](#) on FEMA.gov.
- Explore these smartphone apps that promote breathing and relaxation:
 - [Tactical Breather](#) – shared SAMHSA
 - [Breathe2Relax](#) – developed by DoD

□ General Info for COVID-19:

Iowa:

- COVID-19 information: coronavirus.iowa.gov
- Iowa Department of Public Health: idph.iowa.gov

Kansas:

- Kansas Department of Health and Environment: [Kansas COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

Missouri:

- Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services: [COVID-19 Resources](#)

Nebraska:

- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services: [COVID-19 Resources](#)

National:

- How to protect yourself and what to do if you think you are sick: www.coronavirus.gov.
- Top U.S. Government COVID-related websites: www.usa.gov/coronavirus
- FEMA COVID-19 information: www.fema.gov/coronavirus
- Prepare for COVID-19 and other disasters: www.ready.gov
- Coronavirus FAQs: [CDC: Coronavirus FAQ](#)
- [Coronavirus FAQs for Veterans](#)
- COVID-19 aids for tribal nations/members: [IHS COVID-19 Resources](#)

□ COVID-19 Infection Prevention

- Want to stay safe over the holidays? See how: [CDC: COVID Precautions for the Holidays](#)
- Learn about COVID-19 precautions when taking public transportation: [CDC: Using Public Transportation Safely](#)
- Learn tips for COVID-19 safety at college: [CDC: Back-to-College Tips for Students](#)



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- Follow these tips to avoid COVID-19: [CDC: Tips to Prevent Getting Sick from COVID-19](#)

□ Mental Health & Physical Fitness

- Assess your feelings and find resources to help: [CDC Foundation: How Right Now.org](#)
- Locate mental health and substance abuse services at: [SAMHSA: Treatment Services Locator](#)
- Manage your stress better – tips and tricks: [CDC: Coping with Stress](#)
- Find help if you are a veteran or service member: [Help for Veterans and Service Members](#)
- Get moving! Physical fitness you can do at home during COVID-19: [Scripps: Exercise Tips during COVID-19](#)
- Check out resources from Indian Country to help with stress: [Resources for COVID-19 and Emotional Well-Being](#)

□ General Info for All Hazards:

- Be prepared for an emergency. Learn more at: [Ready.gov](#). Here are some top links:
 - How to make a disaster supply kit: [Ready.gov - Disaster Kit](#)
 - Handy guide for those with disabilities or special needs: [Ready.gov - Preparedness - Disabilities and Special Needs](#)
 - Be the help until help arrives. Learn how at: [Ready.gov - 5 Steps that May Save a Life](#)
 - Help seniors you know be ready for disasters. Learn how at: [Ready.gov - Preparedness for Seniors](#)
 - Pets need to be prepared for emergencies too. Learn more at: [Ready.gov - Pets and Animals](#)
- Get help to navigate financial complexities associated with COVID-19 or other disasters: [FEMA Disaster Financial Management Guide](#).
- Walk through emergency preparedness with the American Red Cross: [Red Cross: How to Prepare for Emergencies](#)



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COVID-19 Emergency Plan Template

Making a plan now will help ensure that you are prepared if you have to isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19. Your college or university will likely have a specific process to follow if you test positive for coronavirus or have been exposed to someone who is positive. It’s important to follow that process. To help with COVID-19 preparedness, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) have developed this emergency plan template to organize some key steps you may want to take. This template should not replace the guidance from your school but can be used in addition to the direction you’re being provided.

Fill out each section below and then share this plan with your parents, another relative, a roommate or friend so they can support you during isolation or quarantine.

Housing

What is your current address?

Are you able to use that address if you have to isolate or quarantine?

Yes No

If “No”, where will you plan to isolate or quarantine (list address):



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Relocation

If you have to move to another location to isolate or quarantine, do you have transportation to get there? If not, how will you move? Note: If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone who is positive, you don't want to take public transportation such as buses, taxis, or ride shares because doing so could spread the virus.

Do you have a disability or condition which requires that arrangements be made ahead of time to ensure your relocation site is accessible? If so, how will you make sure those arrangements are made? Do you have transportation to get there?

Food

You want to determine how you will eat during isolation or quarantine, particularly if you will need to provide your own food. To be prepared, ask and answer these questions:

Options	Yes	No	If no, what's the alternative?
Campus dining hall			
Take-out/delivery			
Refrigerator			
Microwave			

COVID Preparedness Kit

You want to be ready for any emergency, but it's especially important in the current COVID environment. So, you want to prepare a supply kit in advance should you have to relocate because you become sick or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID. Depending upon where you isolate or quarantine (at home, your apartment or in a dorm) you may already have many of these items on hand. Be sure you have enough supplies to last 10-14 days. Here's a quick list to help you pack:

- Clothing to last 10-14 days (especially if you don't have access to laundry facilities)
- Bottled Water
- Food
- Prescription/Over-the-counter medicines (pain relievers, allergy medicines and antacids)
- Toiletries (shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, washcloth, towels, etc.)
- COVID-19 supplies (masks, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes)
- Towels, pillows, extra bedding
- First-aid kit (bandages, disinfecting treatments, antibacterial ointment, digital thermometer, gauze, elastic bandage)
- Extra phone charger
- School supplies
- Comfort items

Classes/Coursework

How do you plan to continue with your classes during isolation or quarantine? Will you need to make special arrangements if you have to isolate, quarantine or relocate?

Communication

List at least two individuals who you will check-in with daily during isolation or quarantine.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Additional Notes: