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Mission Statement

Good health is basic to the enjoyment of a full and productive life. Our mission is to provide the best possible opportunity for good health to the

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Issues on Preparedness

Community Preparedness: The Facts

Did you know that research shows that people who believe themselves “prepared” for a disaster often aren’t as prepared as they think? Forty percent of survey respondents did not have household plans, 80 percent had not conducted home evacuation drills, and nearly 60 percent did not know their community’s evacuation routes.

September is preparedness month and it’s a great time to focus on what we can all do to be better prepared for disasters in our community. A great way to start is to visit FEMA-Prepare@fema.dshs.gov. There you will find The Community Preparedness Toolkit, which provides step-by-step directions along with useful resources for making your community safer, more resilient, and better prepared! The Community Preparedness Toolkit can be used to develop a community-based approach to preparedness, such as a Citizens Corps Council or MRC (Medical Reserve Corps). Such groups ask you to embrace the personal responsibility to be prepared; to get training in first aid and emergency skills; and to volunteer to support local emergency responders, disaster relief, and community safety.

The challenge: Many community-based organizations do not have enough capacity to manage a large number of volunteers, so they need you to organize yourself in coordination with them. This tool kit is designed to either help you organize a group and be a positive addition to a community-based organization, or, if such an organization does not exist, to be a well-organized independently-run group that fills a gap in the community.

A step-by-step guide to getting started and executing service activities follows.

Identify Local Partners

Check out the organizations already doing good work. Many existing service groups have identified community needs and have built the expertise to provide solutions. A few phone calls or scanning a few websites can produce all the information you need to know about your options.

- Find Citizen Corps Councils
- Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units and ask them what you can do to prepare and train yourself and your community for disasters.
- You can also get in touch with your local fire department, police department, paramedics, or emergency management agency to discuss ways to prepare your community and improve its capacity to respond and recover from disaster.
- Contact local chapters of the American Red Cross or the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster for local disaster preparedness and response service opportunities.
- Once you've identified the appropriate community-based organizations, search their website or give them a call to see how you can help, or how you can better prepare yourself and your community.

Build a Team

Citizen Corps Council or Medical Reserve Corps meetings are a valuable tactic to recruiting volunteers and building a team. The meetings allow community members to share their concerns and join together to work for progress. Within the room, you already have all the tools you need to enact change on a local level. Every attendee can contribute time or resources or leadership abilities. Your council meeting will help you identify your leadership team. The people that are committed enough to come to your meeting should be considered potential leaders of the initiatives being implemented in their communities. Council meetings often engage people new to service and unclear about next steps. Serving with the support of a team will increase the ease and comfort of many new volunteers.

Building community through council meetings is a critical step toward improving individual and community preparedness.

Set goals

- Choose and plan a service project.
- Set measurable group and personal goals for your project.
- Identify 5 attendees to be leaders
- Plan the next meeting of the leadership team and identify next steps for each leader.
- Obtain commitments from all attendees to volunteer on a regular basis in the days and weeks leading up to your service project.



Serve Your Community

- Learn about hazards most likely to affect your community and their appropriate responses.

- Learn about local emergency response plans, drills, and exercises.
- Find out what your community is doing to prepare.

After every event, thank your volunteers and sign them up for the next event. When you help others prepare, ask them to “pay it forward” by talking to their friends and family about the importance of preparing, training, and drills.

For more information on preparedness or how you can become an MRC volunteer, call the Sweetwater Nolan County Health Department at 325-235-5463.

Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps
- Prescription medication and glasses if you need them
- Infant formula and diapers for those with babies
- Pet food and extra for water for pets
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance, identification and bank account records in a water-proof, portable container



For a complete list visit www.ready.gov

Back to School: Does Your Checklist Include Vaccines?



From newborns to college, you can help protect your children from 16 serious diseases by getting them vaccinated. Make sure your kids get any needed vaccines before the back-to-school rush!

As a parent, making sure your children are vaccinated on time is an important step toward ensuring their long-term health. Vaccination also helps protect the health of classmates, friends, relatives, and others in the community.

Vaccines for Young Children (Newborn through 6 years old):

- During the early years of life, your children need vaccines to help protect them from diseases that can be very serious, even deadly.
- You can find out what vaccines your children need by visiting CDC's recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule.
- Annual flu vaccines are recommended for children 6 months and older. Each year, millions of children get sick from seasonal flu. Thousands are hospitalized, and some children die from flu. Children of any age with chronic health problems like asthma, diabetes, and disorders of the brain or nervous system are at high risk of serious flu complications.

Vaccines for Preteens and Teens (7 years old through 18 years old)

- All preteens and teens need a flu vaccine every year.
- Some children 6 months through 8 years of age require two doses of flu vaccine. Children 6 months through 8 years getting vaccinated for the first time, and those who have only previously gotten one dose of vaccine, should get two doses of vaccine. The first dose should be taken as soon as the flu vaccine is available, and the second dose should be received at least 28 days after the first dose. In following years, only one dose is needed.
- In addition to a yearly flu vaccine, three vaccines are recommended specifically for preteens;
 - * [HPV vaccine](#) protects against HPV infections that can cause cancer later in life.
 - * [Tdap](#) is a booster shot to help protect preteens from whooping cough, tetanus, and diphtheria.
 - * [Meningococcal conjugate vaccine](#) protects against meningitis, and bloodstream infections (bacteremia or septicemia). These illnesses can be very serious, even fatal.

If your teen hasn't gotten one or more of these vaccines, make an appointment for them to get caught up today.

What Parents Need to Know:

- CDC has online resources and tools to help you make sure your kids are up to date on recommended vaccines and protected from serious diseases.
- If you don't have health insurance, or your insurance policy doesn't cover all recommended childhood vaccines, your child may be eligible for vaccines through the [Vaccines for Children](#) (VFC) program.

Summer Water Safety: “Crypto”-the parasite that lives in the pool

“**Crypto**”, short for **Cryptosporidium**, is a germ that causes diarrhea. This germ is found in the fecal matter of a person who has been infected by Crypto. It has a tough outer shell that allows it to survive for a long time in the environment. It can survive for days even in properly chlorinated pools.

Crypto is one of the most common causes of recreational water illness (disease caused by germs spread through pool water) in the United States and can cause prolonged diarrhea (for 1-2 weeks). It can make anyone sick, but certain groups of people are more likely to become seriously ill when infected with Crypto:

- Young children
- Pregnant women
- Individuals with weakened immune systems

How is Crypto spread in pools?

Crypto is spread by swallowing water that has been contaminated with fecal matter containing Crypto.

You share the water-and the germs in it with every person who enters the pool. If one person infected with Crypto has diarrhea in the water, the water can be contaminated with tens or hundreds of millions of germs. Swallowing even a small amount of water that has been contaminated with the Crypto germ can make you sick. Crypto can also be spread by swallowing contaminated water from water parks, interactive fountains, water play areas, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, streams and oceans.

How do I protect myself, my family, and other swimmers?

- Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea.
- Shower before you get in the water.
- Don't pee or poop in the water.
- Don't swallow the water.
- Take kids on bathroom breaks
- Check diapers and change them in a bathroom or diaper changing area-not pool side.



Crypto can stay alive for days even in well-maintained pools, stopping the germ from getting there in the first place is essential!

For more information on Crypto, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)