

**MAINTAIN YOUR
PLAN STEP #4**



Are You Ready?

Is a series of handouts designed to assist you and your family to plan ahead for emergencies.



For more information on Maintain Your Plan, Step #4: Check out these Helpful websites:



Washington County
Emergency Services/
Emergency Management
33 W. Washington St.
Hagerstown, MD 21740
240-313-2930



www.fema.gov



www.redcross.org



www.hhs.gov



www.whitehouse.gov

Are You Ready?

WASHINGTON COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

APRIL 2006

Four Steps to Preparedness

- Step 1: Get informed (in January 2006 issue)
- Step 2: Make a Plan (in February 2006 issue)
- Step 3: Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit (in March 2006 issue)

Step 4: Maintain Your Plan

Quiz: Review your plan every six months and quiz your family about what to do.

Drill: Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis with your family.

Restock: Check food supplies for expiration dates and discard, or replace stored water and food every six months.

Test: Read the indicator on your fire extinguisher(s) and follow the manufacturer's instructions to recharge. Test your smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Replace alarms every 10 years.

Homeland Security Advisory System Recommendations Individual

Risk of Attack Recommended

Severe	<p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recommended actions at lower levels • Listen to radio/TV for current information/instructions • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities immediately • Contact business to determine status of work day • Adhere to any travel restrictions announced by local governmental authorities • Be prepared to shelter in place or evacuate if instructed to do so by local governmental authorities • Provide volunteer services only as requested
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High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recommended actions at lower levels • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Review your personal disaster plan • Exercise caution when traveling • Have shelter in place materials on hand and review procedure in <u>Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected</u> brochure • If a need is announced, donate blood at designated blood collection center • Prior to volunteering, contact agency to determine their needs
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Elevated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recommended actions at lower levels • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Ensure disaster supplies kit is stocked and ready • Check telephone numbers and e-mail addresses in your personal communication plan and update as necessary • Develop alternate routes to/from work/school and practice them • Continue to provide volunteer services
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Guarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recommended actions at lower level • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Review stored disaster supplies and replace items that are outdated • Develop emergency communication plan with family/neighbors/friends • Provide volunteer services and take advantage of additional volunteer training opportunities
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Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain copy of <u>Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected</u> brochure from your local Red Cross chapter • Develop a personal disaster plan and disaster supplies kit using Red Cross brochures <u>Your Family Disaster Plan</u> and <u>Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit</u> • Examine volunteer opportunities in your community; choose an agency to volunteer with and receive initial training • Take a Red Cross CPR/AED and first aid course
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An Ounce of Prevention

Surviving Spring Allergy Season

It's that time of the year, spring is in full swing and winter is slowly becoming a memory. While some people will be planning family picnics, trips to the ballpark and other ways to enjoy the warm weather, 35 million Americans will be preparing to deal with spring allergy symptoms.

Allergic rhinitis, or hayfever, is triggered by "allergens," substances that initiate an allergic response, such as pollens or molds, according to the American Academy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI). People with allergies experience symptoms resulting from a reaction triggered by allergens to which a person is sensitive. These typically inhaled allergens combine with an antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE). This pairing of the allergen and IgE causes the release of chemicals such as histamine which cause inflammation in the nose and airway leading to symptoms of itchy, watery eyes, sneezing, nasal congestion, a runny nose, drowsiness and headaches.

Since allergies can lead to other chronic conditions such as asthma, they should not be taken lightly. If seasonal allergy symptoms are making you miserable, you should consider seeing an allergist.

An important component of any allergy management plan is avoiding the pollens and molds that make you sneeze and wheeze. Following are some tips to help you lessen your exposure to seasonal allergens:

- ✦ Keep windows closed at night to prevent pollens or molds from drifting into the home.
- ✦ Use an air conditioner and dehumidifier to keep air clean, cool and dry.
- ✦ Keep car windows closed when traveling.
- ✦ Minimize outdoor activity on days when the pollen count or humidity is reported to be high or on windy days when mold and pollen are blown about. To find out the pollen count for your area, visit the NAB Web site at www.aaaai.org/nab.
- ✦ Take vacations to a more pollen-free area, such as the beach or sea.
- ✦ Use a paper mask when mowing or raking which stirs up pollens and molds.
- ✦ Avoid hanging sheets or clothing out to dry - pollen and molds collect on them.
- ✦ Take medications as prescribed in the recommended dosage. Do not take more medication to alleviate severe symptoms.
- ✦ Take a shower after spending time outdoors to remove pollen and mold that may be on your skin and hair.