

## Facts about Microbes

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### What is a microbe?

Microbes are very small organisms that are too tiny to see without a microscope. Bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites are microbes which can cause disease in humans, animals, and plants.

### How are microbes spread?

**Contact** – contact with an ill person or contact with a contaminated surface

**Droplet** – respiratory secretions through coughing, sneezing, talking

**Airborne** – airborne droplets

**Common vehicle** – food or water

**Vector-Borne** – vectors such as mosquitoes, flies, or ticks

### How is the spread of germs prevented?

The single most effective way to prevent getting ill is to perform appropriate hand-washing. It is also important to stay home when sick and to cover your coughs and sneezes.

### How are infections treated?

Medicine is available to treat bacterial infections. Viral infections cannot be treated with antibiotics. There are some antiviral drugs available for infections by certain viruses.

### What is being done to prevent and control the spread of diseases?

Certain communicable diseases are reported to the local health department per N.J.A.C 8:57. Local health departments investigate the reportable communicable diseases and outbreaks to prevent and control the spread of illness.

## Communication in an Emergency

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### How would I communicate with my family during an emergency?

Make sure that your family has an Emergency Communication Plan to help you stay in touch with each other during an emergency. During a disaster or emergency, you and your family members may not be in the same place or may get separated.

### What should my Emergency Communication Plan include?

Your plan should include several different methods for communicating with your family.

- Have an out-of-state family contact.
- Pick two places to meet if you get separated - one nearby and one at a distance.
- Develop a family e-mail distribution list.
- Develop a family member contact list - include work, school and cell phone numbers.
- Teach your family how to access information about the situation and their safety.

### COUNTY OF BERGEN



**James J. Tedesco III**

*County Executive*

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

**Department of Health Services**

## PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

## Information for You and Your Family



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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# Public Health Emergency

## What is a Public Health Emergency?

A public health emergency is anything that poses an urgent threat to the public's health. Natural occurrences include pandemic flu. Man-made occurrences can be either accidental or deliberate. Bioterrorism is an example of a deliberate man-made public health emergency.

## What would happen in a Public Health Emergency?

Instructions would be given on how members of the public could protect themselves. These instructions might include how to **Shelter-in-Place** or how to receive prophylaxis (preventive) medications for yourself and your family at a **POD (Point of Distribution)** site.

## How is a Public Health Emergency declared?

A public health emergency is declared by the Governor in conjunction with the State Commissioner of Health. This emergency can be declared in response to a public health emergency originating in NJ or directly affecting the state's population.

## How would I know what to do in a Public Health Emergency?

A public information campaign would be conducted through newspapers, radio, television, the Bergen County Department of Health Services website ([www.bergenhealth.org](http://www.bergenhealth.org)), the Bergen County information line (201-225-7000) and through local municipalities and Boards of Health.



## What does Shelter-in-Place mean?

Shelter-in-Place means to take immediate shelter wherever you are - at home, school or work. Go to an interior room with no or few windows and take steps to prevent outside air from getting into the room.

## Why would I be told to Shelter-in-Place?

Natural or accidental release of harmful radiological, biological or chemical contaminants into the air, such as a gas leak or chemical spill may be reasons to Shelter-in-Place. Also, during severe storms (hurricanes, tornadoes), sheltering in place may be the safest course of action.

## How would I find out if I have to Shelter-in-Place?

Police or fire department warning procedures such as phone alert messages, news media sources, local health department hotlines or websites, and Emergency Alert System broadcasts on radio, cable and television.

## How can I prepare to Shelter-in-Place?

For detailed information check the following websites:

The American Red Cross

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

Bergen County Department of Health Service

[www.bergenhealth.org](http://www.bergenhealth.org)

State of New Jersey

[www.nj.state.gov](http://www.nj.state.gov)

## What is a POD?

A POD is a clinic or site where a large number of people will be able to come and pick up medication in the event of a naturally occurring disease outbreak, public health emergency or bioterrorist event. A POD would allow for the medication to be distributed in a safe, rapid and efficient manner. One person per family, 18 years of age or older, will be able to pick up the medication for the entire family. No ID will be required and no one will be denied entry to the POD.

## What medications will be given out?

The oral medications used to fight the biological agents that would most likely be released in a bioterrorist event are Doxycycline (Doxy) and Ciprofloxacin (Cipro). Because certain medical conditions may prevent you from taking one medication or the other, you should ask your healthcare provider now if there is any problem with you or your family members taking either one of these medications. Advance planning will assure that you and your family will be prepared if an event occurs.

## Where will the POD be located?

POD locations have been identified around Bergen County by the Bergen County Department of Health Services (BCDHS) as well as local municipalities.

## How will the public be informed about the opening of a POD?

A public information campaign about the POD will be conducted through newspapers, radio, television, the BCDHS website ([www.bergenhealth.org](http://www.bergenhealth.org)), the Bergen County information line (201-225-7000) and through local municipalities and Boards of Health.

