

Facts:

from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment



Preparedness: The Strategic National Stockpile

The Strategic National Stockpile, or SNS, is a national resource for protecting people in a public health emergency.

There are a number of stockpiles stored at secure locations all over the country to be able to deliver supplies quickly.

What is in the stockpile?

The stockpile includes large quantities of medicine and medical supplies that might be needed during a public health emergency.

The medicine in the stockpile is free for everyone. There is enough medicine to protect people in several large cities at the same time.

A few examples of public health emergencies include a widespread flu outbreak, or an earthquake that causes many injuries or disrupts water supplies.

When is the stockpile used?

When there is a public health emergency in Colorado, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is in close contact with the Governor's Office and with local health agencies throughout the state.

If local supplies of medicine or other medical supplies begin to run out, the Governor can contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to request the stockpile.

Once federal and local officials agree that the stockpile is needed, the stockpile supplies and medicines will be delivered to any state in the U.S. within 12 hours.

The stockpile helped emergency responders get much needed supplies to people during major disasters such as the New York City terrorist attacks in 2001, the Florida hurricanes in 2004, and the Gulf Coast hurricanes in 2005.

How do the supplies get to my area?

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and your local health department or county nursing service have plans to receive and distribute the medicines and medical supplies to local communities as quickly as possible.

The state health department and your local health agency test these plans regularly. These tests, or "exercises," help public health officials to be certain the medicines can be delivered quickly, wherever they are needed in the state, to protect you and your family during a public health emergency.

How will we know where to get medicine?

Find out how to get medicine to protect yourself and your family by

watching television, listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, checking the community Web site, or learning from trusted community leaders.

In very remote areas of Colorado, the local public health nursing service has plans to get information to area residents. Some areas may get telephone calls by the reverse-911 system; others may rely upon volunteers to deliver messages. Some may have designated community gathering places to post information, such as post offices or churches.

There will be information about:

- Where to go to get medicine.
- When to go.
- What to do before you go.
- What to take with you.
- How to get there.
- What to expect when you get there.
- The medicines you will get.
- Where to go if you are sick or have any special needs.



The containers for SNS supplies are designed to use all available space in a jet.

What kind of medicine is in the stockpile?

Most of the medicines are antibiotics. Antibiotics are used for bacterial infections, such as those that could be caused by anthrax or plague. The stockpile may include vaccinations if the public health emergency requires them.

Depending on what is needed in the affected area, a shipment from the stockpile could contain chemical antidotes, antitoxins, life-support medications, and medical and surgical supplies.

The supplies in the Strategic National Stockpile are packaged in different ways, depending on the nature of the emergency. Some packages contain more general supplies and some are specific to the situation. Getting the necessary medicines to people who need it is the primary goal.

The stockpile also is designed to be used with the drug and medical supplies that already are in the communities affected by the public health emergency. That means some supplies may arrive by air from the closest stockpile, and

others may be delivered locally from a pharmacy or manufacturing plant.

How will the medicines be provided?

Your local public health department or county nursing service will use staff and volunteers to get medicine to everyone who needs it. Most agencies are planning to distribute the medicines at one or more locations in their communities.

There are four simple steps to the process:

1. You will fill out a form;
2. You will show the form to an official at the site;
3. You will get your medicine; and
4. You will turn in your form.

What is the purpose of the forms?

The forms you fill out include information about your health that could be important for the medical staff to know before you take any medicines.

Your name will be kept on file to be certain that everyone who needs

medicine gets it. The information you provide is private and only available to the medical and public health officials who must have it.

In some areas, forms may be in the newspaper or available at grocery stores or other neighborhood locations. Everyone needing medicine will receive it.

How will I know how long to take the medicine?

You will get information about the medicine and how to take it. It is important to follow the directions. Medicines such as antibiotics can become less effective if they are not used properly.

You also will find out whether you will have to return to get more medicine at a later time.

Should I buy my own antibiotic medicines now?

No. There are enough antibiotic medicines in the stockpile for all who need them. If people take antibiotics without a prescription, more antibiotic resistance will develop, and then the drugs won't work when you really need them.

Reliable sources of information

Colorado HELP hotline
1-877-462-2911 (toll-free)
M-F 7 a.m. – 11 p.m.;
S-S 9:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VIII
www.fema.gov
303-235-4800

Ready Colorado
www.readycolorado.com
1-800-639-READY (7323) (toll-free)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov
1-800-311-3435 (toll-free)

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
www.cdphe.state.co.us
303-692-2700
1-800-886-7689 (toll-free)



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