

## Preventing a Home Epidemic

Epidemics effect and jeopardise all facets of social and family life. Rapid, rational response during a widespread illness or disaster may not only save your life, but also the lives of those you love at home. Following simple guidelines for healthy behavior, and communicating epidemic plans to ensure that your family members are fully aware of how plans are to be executed, will help you to handle the situation more effectively.

### It All Starts with Healthy Habits:

- Maintain a balanced diet.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Wash your hand thoroughly and often—for at least 10-20 seconds.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces—especially work, kitchen and bathroom areas.
- Keep up on immunisations.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with those who are ill.

### Making Family Plans

Many families are putting together pandemic and epidemic information to prevent their loved ones from falling ill. The following are simple tips that you can follow should an epidemic occur.

- Communicate your epidemic plan and be sure everyone in your family is fully aware of it and how it is to be executed—contact, evacuation assembly location.
- Stock up on essentials—nonperishable items (seven days of food is recommended) and medical, practical, household and personal items.
- Prepare an outbreak plan should a loved one become ill. Discuss how you would care for sick family members and what each individuals' responsibilities would be, should the need arise.
- Make a list of emergency contacts and information, including personal contacts, family Doctor, nearest hospital and pharmacy, school, employer, and public health department and emergency contact information, such as Gardai, Fire and Ambulance Services.
- Know essential health information such as blood type, allergies, past and current medical conditions, as well as current medications and dosage information.
- Have a radio available so you are aware of government enforced quarantines and travel restrictions, as well as school/work closings.

### Did You Know?

According to the Centers for Disease Control, frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of diseases and keep you and your family healthy. Getting immunisations is fast, easy, fairly inexpensive and is proven to save lives. Be certain that you and your family get immunisations as suggested by your Doctor.