



For **Immediate Release**
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Contact: Michele Bever, PhD, MPH, Executive Director
 Jim Morgan, Public Health Risk Coordinator
 402-462-6211 or toll free at 1-877-238-7595
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You can plan ahead for disasters

“Disasters don’t plan ahead, but you can,” recommends Jim Morgan, public health risk coordinator for the South Heartland District Health Department. “We hope residents of Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties will take action to prepare, now and throughout the year, for the types of emergencies that could affect us where we live and work, and also where we travel.”

This September, in observance of National Preparedness Month, South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) is joining other agencies across the nation to encourage emergency planning.

“We hope your plan will never need to be used,” Morgan said, “but having a plan and communicating it to your family is the key step toward preparedness.”

“Everyone in your family should know your emergency plans, including what to do, where to go, and how to contact other members of the family,” said Morgan. “Then practice your plan to make sure it works.”

Morgan recommends making a kit of items that would be useful during a disaster. “We have a brochure available on our website with suggestions of items to consider for your kit,” he said. “This is something you can work on over a period of time.”

The health department recommends that, in addition to food and water and other basic necessities, the kit should include medications and items for your children and pets. Morgan’s family added their own twist to emergency preparedness. “In our household,” he said, “we have designated our basement as a ‘safe place’ and we keep football helmets handy for our grandchildren to wear in case of a tornado.”

Morgan noted that community planning is also important for emergency preparedness. For example, neighborhoods could have a plan for checking on neighbors or community members who might have special needs or who might be more vulnerable to the effects of disasters. “Preparedness goes beyond the walls of your own house,” he said. “Everyone needs to get involved for everyone else’s sake.”

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