How can I help during an emergency?

Medical and non-medical volunteers are needed to support local public health officials at an EDS. Contact your local Board of Health, Medical Reserve Corps, or the Massachusetts System for Advance Registration for more information on getting involved.

Get Involved

Massachusetts Medical Reserve Corps
www.mamedicalreservecorps.org/

Massachusetts System for Advance Registration
www.mass.gov/msar

Learn More

MDPH—Emergency Preparedness
www.mass.gov/dph/emergencyprep

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
www.mass.gov/mema

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.emergency.cdc.gov

Contact your local Board of Health or Emergency Management Director if you would like to find out more about your town's plans or if you will need assistance at an EDS.

To learn more about public health preparedness in your community, contact:

Greater New Bedford Medical Reserve Corp
c/o New Bedford Health Department
1213 Purchase Street, New Bedford, MA 02740
(508)991-6261; Louise.Donaghy@newbedford-ma.gov

Getting Medicine During a Public Health Emergency

Emergency Dispensing Sites (EDS)

- ✓ ***Where to go***
- ✓ ***What to bring***
- ✓ ***How to get involved***

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Emergency Preparedness Bureau
Strategic National Stockpile Program

What is an Emergency Dispensing Site?

An **Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS)** is a place where you can get medicine or vaccines that will help keep you from getting sick in a public health emergency.

The goal of the EDS is to make sure that **anyone that needs medicine can get it**.

Why would an EDS be opened?

An EDS would be opened if there was a need to distribute medicine quickly to many people due to:

- An outbreak of a disease that is easily spread from person to person such as Hepatitis A

  or

- An uncommon event like an anthrax attack

How will I know where my EDS is located?

An EDS location is usually:

- In a large public building like a local school or community center
- Chosen by cities and towns before an emergency, but the locations may not be announced until an emergency actually happens

To find out more about the locations and hours of the EDS closest to you, check:

- Local radio
- Local television
- Newspapers
- City and town web sites
- Local public health or city/ town officials

What do I need to bring to the EDS?

Bring the following for you and anyone else you're picking up medicine for:

- List of medicines being taken
- List of allergies to medicines
- List of health conditions
- List of the ages and approximate weights of any children

What do I need to know about getting medicine or a vaccine at an EDS?

During a public health emergency:

- A specific medicine or vaccine will be **free to everyone**
- You will not be asked for ID
- You will not be asked about your immigration status
- If bottles of pills are needed, *only one* person needs to go to the EDS to pick up the medicine for the entire household
- If vaccines are needed, everyone will need to go to the EDS to get their vaccine

Will I have to wait in line to get my medicine?

Lines may be long so you should:

- Bring water and snacks for waiting in line
- Be sure to wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing
- Stay calm—there will be enough medicine for everyone

An EDS **will not treat sick people**. State and local public health officials will tell you the best place to go for medical care during the emergency.