



PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 26, 2020

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Preparedness 2020: Masks, sanitizers and thermometers are added to supply kits and back-to school lists

BREWSTER, NY—Being prepared is a long-established mantra for emergency readiness advocates everywhere. Each September FEMA, as the Federal Emergency Management Administration is more commonly known, creates an annual theme for National Preparedness Month. For 2020 it is “Disasters don’t wait, make your plan today.” In the age of COVID, being prepared takes on new considerations and potential consequences as additional items, such as extra masks, hand sanitizers and thermometers, should be added to supply lists.

“There were some amazing stories of neighbors helping neighbors with our recent tropical storm Isaias and the Putnam County agencies pulled together, going above and beyond, as they always do,” said MaryEllen Odell, Putnam County Executive. “For individual residents and families, discussing how to best communicate during times of emergencies or disaster, and having a primary plan and a back-up is the best advice.”

Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, agreed, adding “This has been a year like no other, and as September approaches and families prepare to send their children back to school, they are adding masks, sanitizers and now thermometers to not only their preparedness kits, but also to their back-to school routines. Having a thermometer and a back-up thermometer, and creating a routine to ensure you are able to assess the health of your family is especially important as we make plans to reopen our schools safely.”

Preparedness kits or disaster kits are sometimes also called “go kits,” especially when they are assembled in a duffle bag or other easy-to-carry sack or backpack that may be necessary if authorities are urging evacuation. FEMA’s Ready.gov website has a handy list of basic supplies to include in your emergency kit, along with more specific suggestions, and how to maintain your kit. Ready.gov also has tips for creating an emergency plan and lists the disasters or emergency situations that you can prepare for in your plan.

“We prepare by conducting numerous drills throughout the year so we are ready when an emergency or disaster happens, and we urge residents to prepare as well by having extra supplies and a communications plan” said Ken Clair, Putnam’s Commissioner of Emergency Services. “Isaias was the ninth tropical storm of the hurricane season, and there were many downed trees and power outages. An enormous amount of work needed to be done, and our team got it done.”

County Executive MaryEllen Odell also credits teamwork for the successful recovery, saying “Our county highway and local highway crews, law enforcement, fire departments, town hall staff, as well as our senior services, social services and legislature, all rallied together and pushed to keep residents safe and complete the necessary work.”

To start or update a personal or family emergency plan, FEMA's website is the place to start. Visit: <https://www.ready.gov/plan>.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services, provided directly and through collaboration, include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit our county website at www.putnamcountyny.gov; or visit our social media sites @PutnamHealthNY on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.