

Be Ready, Be Prepared

On March 9th, we turned our clocks forward and said “HELLO” to spring! The Montgomery County Health Department would like to remind everyone when setting clocks forward; it is also a good time to check your emergency preparedness stockpile. If you have not created a stockpile yet, now is the time to create one!

It is important to have at least a three-day supply of bottled water, nonperishable foods and essential medications set aside for each member of your family. This includes at least one gallon of drinking water per person per day. Remember your pets are part of the family too, so include some emergency supplies for them.

You also should have an emergency kit that includes a flashlight and either a battery operated or windup radio. Your kit should contain a can opener, matches, and some cash. Also, a first aid or medical kit, along with a supply of any medications you take, should be stored for an emergency too.

If you already have an emergency stockpile of food and supplies, here are some simple steps to take to help you and your loved ones are better prepared:

- Check the expiration dates on food and water. If needed, cycle it out and replace it.
- Check the expiration date on your medication (s). Be sure your stockpile medications are for current prescriptions and conditions.
- Check and refresh fire extinguishers.
- Use markers or stickers to note expiration dates on items, so updating is quick and easy.
- Is your emergency contact information and communication plan up to date?

In addition, as always, don't forget to check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Take time to make sure everyone in your household can hear the alarms and that the alarm will wake them.

We all hope our families and Montgomery County will never have to face a disaster or serious disease outbreak. But if something catastrophic would occur, we want you to be prepared. ■