

# Terrorism and other public health threats



## What are public health threats?

Public health threats are events or disasters that can affect you and your community. Some examples of public health threats are:

- Natural disasters
- Disease outbreaks
- Accidents involving hazardous substances
- Terrorist attacks
- Racial attacks
- Active shooters or other violence in public areas

Public health threats can affect air quality, cause shortages of safe water and food, and cut off electricity, gas, telephone and other services. You and your family members may be separated.

Disasters and public health threats are hard to predict and usually are out of your control. But you can take steps to help keep yourself and your family safe.



## How can you prepare for a disaster?

Here are some things you can do to help prepare for a disaster:

- Learn about specific health threats and what you can do to reduce the risk to your health and safety.
- Make an emergency plan and gather the supplies you may need during an emergency.
- Learn basic first aid skills such as CPR.
- And know where to find first aid information in case of injuries. For example, you can keep a first aid book in your emergency supplies kit.
- Always look to local authorities and health experts for specific, up-to-date information for your area.

Following these steps can help you be better prepared for any type of public health threat.



## What health threats can happen in your community?

There are many things in our environment that can be harmful. Chemicals, fumes, viruses, bacteria and low-level radiation are just a few of them.

When these substances are released in large quantities or get out of control, they can become urgent public health threats. Guidelines for how to prepare for and avoid a problem often depend on how the substance is spread.

In general, a health threat may spread through a community:

- In the air
- In the water supply or food
- From human to human
- From animal or insect to human

Call your local health department for information about health threats in your area.



---

### Critical support when you need it

Visit [optumwellbeing.com/criticalsupportcenter](https://optumwellbeing.com/criticalsupportcenter) for additional critical support resources and information.



**This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.** This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Consult with your clinician for specific health care needs, treatment or medication. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and is subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.