



WEBSitings

Brief profiles of useful websites and online resources

Emergency Preparedness

Be informed. Make a plan. Build a kit. Be prepared. These models are promoted on the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's *Ready* campaign website, <http://www.ready.gov>. Here, visitors are encouraged to have emergency information on hand for accidental emergencies, natural disasters, and terrorism.

In the *Be Informed* tab, visitors can learn about wireless emergency alerts, including severe weather advisories and AMBER (child abduction) alerts; the emergency alert system, which can be activated solely by the U.S. president; and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio. Web advertisement banners that visitors can use on their own websites are available. There is also a robust section on natural disasters, including drought, earthquakes, tornadoes, and wildfires, as well as before, during, and after materials for emergencies from small-scale home fires to large-scale nuclear blasts.

The *Make a Plan* tab reminds visitors that a family might not be together when an emergency strikes. A ready-to-download Family Emergency Plan is available, and information on how to protect infants and young children, seniors, and animals is provided by PDF and video. The Military Family Preparedness section offers information specific to army, navy, air force, and coast guard families.

After making a plan, visitors can click on the *Build a Kit* tab for important instructions on supplies, maintaining an emergency kit over time, and kit storage considerations.

Those who wish to get involved in community emergency preparedness may be interested in the *Get*



<http://www.ready.gov>

Involved tab. Business-specific plans are available at <http://www.ready.gov/business> and a child-friendly approach to emergency preparedness is available at <http://www.ready.gov/kids>.

A Spanish version is also offered at <http://www.listo.gov>.

Caring for the Caregiver

Those who are new to caregiving and those who seek additional support can take advantage of the online resources that are provided by the VA at <http://www.caregiver.va.gov>. This is an online community that takes the guesswork out of comprehensive caregiving.

The *Caregiver Tool Box* provides diagnosis care sheets, tips and checklists to help the caregiver stay on track, advice on how to stay organized, and quick access to the VA's Resources & Education for Stroke Caregivers' Understanding & Empowerment Web page. All resources are free and printer-friendly.

But sometimes being best equipped to care for a loved one is for the caregiver to first take care of him or herself. A section called *Staying Strong* provides encouragement and guidance

on maintaining balance between work and family, as well as advice on how to take time to stay healthy and not burn out.

A free 6-week online workshop called Building Better Caregivers is available by contacting a local caregiver support coordinator at any VAMC, who can be found in a search-by-zip code option in the *Help Near Home* section.

Armed With Immunization

The best defense against disease is to immunize with a vaccine, but with all of the conflicting views and opinions that circulate, there are many things to consider. Log on to <http://www.vaccines.gov> to obtain information on all the different vaccine options, including who should get vaccinated and when.

The website covers the basics on safety, effectiveness, protection, and prevention; comprehensive information on the different vaccine-preventable diseases, such as hepatitis A and B, shingles, and tuberculosis; and resources on how to pay for a vaccine, including information for uninsured families who can access care through the Affordable Care Act. ●