

I HAVE been asked by the Minister of Health to give a short series of talks on home precautions. What I have to say is not "information on what people should do in an emergency"—"people" is so often taken as meaning "other people." These are definite instructions and are meant for YOU, for each of you and not for "Emergency" but for right NOW. Have you got your preparations made? If you consider you have, check them over. If you have not, well here are things you must see to *immediately*. Discuss these points with your family, or with your friends, and get all your preparations made.

The things I will be discussing are matters which intimately affect each one of us in our daily lives, and some of them are not exactly "drawing room." These instructions are intended to help us to guard our health, to protect ourselves and our fellow men from the danger of epidemics—particularly of typhoid fever, a danger which always arises when there is damage to any city's water supply and sanitary services.

WATER: It is essential to have water, and it is necessary that it should be safe: if we are raided, water mains will be broken, and lots of water will be needed for fire-fighting purposes, so our taps may be dry for some time. Hence *no water must be wasted*. A day's supply of essential water for drinking and cooking (at least one gallon per head of the family) should always be kept on hand in a clean container, which should be kept covered. Water will remain palatable and safe for a considerable period if the container it is put in is clean to start with. See that the copper is always thoroughly cleaned after use, and kept filled with water. This can be used next washing day and will not be wasted. *All water used for drinking or cooking must be boiled*. This makes it safe. You can, of course, make tea or other hot drinks with it as you prefer—but don't drink raw water. You will be informed when it is all right again.

HOT WATER SERVICE: As the water supply will be off for some time, the gas or power supply serving the hot water service should be immediately switched off, to prevent damage, and if water is heated by the range, the range fire should be put out. Remember that in your hot water storage you have an

GET READY NOW!

From a talk broadcast by Dr. Hubert Smith on Wednesday, May 20. Further talks of interest to householders and E.P.S. workers will be given each Wednesday evening at 6.30. These will be broadcast from all main National Stations.

emergency supply. This, however, should also be boiled before use, as contaminated water may get into it after a "Blitz."

DRAINAGE: From the time the first bomb drops, until you are informed that the drainage system is properly functioning, the W.C. should be locked or the pan boarded up, so that it cannot be used, and sinks, baths, washtubs, etc., should not be used as no waste water should be allowed to run into the drain. Use basins for washing, and washing-up, not the sink, and empty your waste water outside.

Do not wait for instructions that the sewers are damaged if a raid should occur. These are things, like water mains, that *will* be damaged. Damage to one almost invariably will mean damage to the other, since they are usually laid close together in the roads. (This, by the way, is the main reason for boiling your drinking water, as sewage will seep into a cracked or empty water main from the broken sewer close by.) This means that in place of the W.C. a temporary earth closet or pan privy must be fixed up and installed in an outhouse if one is available, and provided with a lid to keep out flies.

If sewers are damaged, it is possible that water closets may be unusable for a considerable period, and the disposal of excreta, that is nightsoil, may be a matter of serious concern. A nightsoil collection service will be set up as soon as possible, to deal with hotels, offices, etc., in the centre of the city, but all householders who have any garden at all must make arrangements for the burial of nightsoil on their own property, even if it should mean temporary loss of the front lawn or the most prized flower bed.

The garden should be ploughed out in strips of between three and five feet in width. A trench, of spade depth only—

no more than one foot—should be dug along the width of the first strip at its far end, and the nightsoil placed in it. This is covered by digging the next trench and this will then be ready for the next load of nightsoil. It is just as if you are methodically digging over the whole garden. The nightsoil needs the air, and worms, etc., in the top layers of the soil, for rapid disintegration. All it needs, is covering just enough to avoid a nuisance from smell and flies. Just a spade deep, remember. It will completely disappear in two or three weeks. Disinfectants should not be put into the nightsoil bucket as they prevent rapid decay.

REFUSE: Refuse should be kept covered, and as dry as possible so that it can be burned. Whatever cannot be burned should be buried, just like the nightsoil.

FOOD PROTECTION: With the sanitary services disorganised, there is likely to be more contamination of food than usual, and special precautions must be taken over this. All milk should be boiled, unless it is pasteurised and already bottled. All food should be kept in flyproof cupboards, or kept covered with clean butter-muslin. Food freshly cooked is far the safest.

The danger of Typhoid Fever will be considerably increased in times of emergency like this. Anyone who is handling food (and that applies particularly to the housewife or cook in the kitchen) must be most careful to ensure that her hands are clean before touching any food and all must wash their hands before every meal. In spite of the fact that water may be short, in fact just because of this, extra precautions are very very necessary. The water used for washing the hands and dishes should be boiled if possible, or should be rain water.

GAS: The risk of fire (if your house should be damaged) will be decreased if the gas has been turned off at the meter beforehand. If you are not sure, find out now where the meter tap is, and see that it will turn easily. If it is stiff, keep a spanner close by it always, or have it greased so that it can be turned off easily. If you can do so, turn off the gas at the meter every night, but in any case remember that it must be turned off when the alarm sounds. See also that you all know where the water can be turned off at the main before it enters your house, so that water will not be wasted if damage should occur to your water pipes.

If there are any points you are not clear about, get in touch with the nearest Health Office and we will do our best to help you.

Now I will repeat the main points:—

1. See that your emergency water is always there, and that the vessels it is in are clean. Boil all drinking water.
2. Fix up your emergency sanitary scheme now—that is your pan privy or earth closet.
3. Don't use the W.C. or sinks until you are told that it is safe to do so, that is, until you are told that repairs are complete.
4. Arrange that all washing and wash-up will be done in basins and emptied outside.
5. Consider your garden now. Decide where you will start your trenches to bury your night soil. The trenches should be only 1 foot deep.
6. Get rid of waste water and urine by pouring into the trench or over the dug earth.
7. Fix up your incinerator to burn your refuse.
8. Protect your food against flies and vermin, and particularly protect it against human contamination. That means "Wash your hands before handling any food." Cook your food and boil the water.

These instructions are meant for YOU; for everyone of you.

If these matters have not already been attended to, see to them at once—at home, in your house, or room, or flat, and in office, shop, or factory. Don't expect any one else to do your work for you—it's YOUR job.

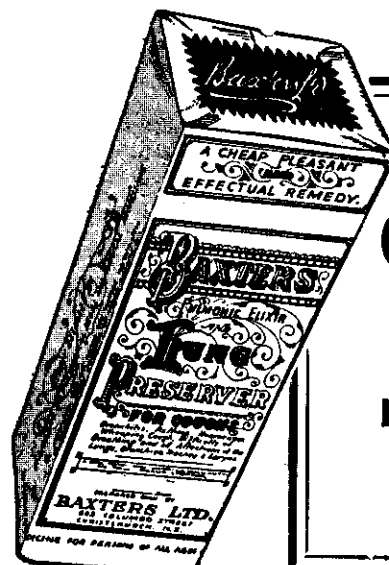


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