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Personal Health Preparedness

There are many reasons to prepare your health for an emergency. They start with your family and friends and extend to your neighbors and community at large. But most Americans don't have supplies set aside or plans in place to protect themselves or their family's health and safety in the event of a natural disaster.

The good news is that it's never too late to prepare for a public health emergency. You can take actions, make healthy choices, and download free resources to help you prepare for, adapt to, and cope with adversity.

Learn how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, then share what you've learned with others to help build more resilient communities.

Personal Health Preparedness

A major public health emergency like a hurricane or a lengthy power outage can limit your access to supplies and services for several days, weeks, or even months. Be prepared with safe water and food, basic supplies, and the personal items you need to protect your health in an emergency.

Personal Needs:

- An emergency water supply.
- Nonperishable and ready-to-eat food, including specialty foods—such as nutrition drinks and ready-to-feed formula—for infants, and people with dietary restrictions, food allergies and sensitivities, and medical conditions such as diabetes.
- Home use medical devices and assistive technologies devices, such as hearing aids, contact lenses, and contact lens solution.
- Medical supplies.
- First aid supplies.
- For more essentials, [click here](#).

Prescriptions:

- A 7- to 10-day emergency supply of essential or priority medications stored in a waterproof, childproof container.
- An up-to-date list, including
 - All prescription medications, including dosage amounts and the names of their generic equivalents
 - Medical supply needs
 - Known allergies
- Nonprescription drugs, including pain and fever relievers, diuretics, antihistamines, and antidiarrheal medications stored in childproof containers.
- For more information on prescriptions, [click here](#).

Paperwork:

- Copies of insurance cards and medical records, including
 - Health insurance card
 - Immunization and vaccination records
- Vital records (e.g., birth and death certificates and adoption records) and personal identification, including
 - Passport
 - Driver's license
 - Social Security card
- Copies of current medical emergency plans, such as advance directives and asthma action plans.
- For more information on paperwork, [click here](#).

Power Sources:

- A flashlight or head lamp.
- Extra batteries in standard sizes, such as AA and AAA.
- Car charger(s) and adapters for electricity-dependent equipment and devices.
- A generator with at least 20 feet of extension cord(s).
- Battery-powered smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors.
- For more power sources, [click here](#).

Practical Skills:

- Learn the right way to wash your hands. Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself, your family, and others from getting sick.

- Learn how to use a portable generator safely to prevent CO poisoning.
- Learn how to create and store an emergency water supply.
- For more practical skills, [click here](#).

Plan Ahead

More than a collection of names, phone numbers, and street addresses, an emergency action plan is an instruction manual for how to stay healthy, stay informed, and stay in contact in an emergency. Because an emergency action plan affects everyone in your household, the whole household should be involved in making and practicing the plan.

Stay Healthy:

- Use generators safely—outside; in a dry area; and at least 20 feet from any window, door, or vent to prevent CO poisoning.
- Wash your hands to prevent the spread of disease. Hand sanitizers are not effective when hands are visibly dirty and do not eliminate all types of germs.
- If you or someone in your family has asthma, make an asthma management plan that identifies known asthma triggers, describes daily treatment (such as what kind of medicines to take and when to take them), and explains when to call the doctor or go to the emergency room.
- For more ways to stay healthy, [click here](#).

Stay Informed:

- Sign up with your state and/or local emergency management offices to receive emergency alerts and notifications.
- Monitor local news coverage for emergency information, including evacuation orders, boil water advisories, and air quality reports. Beware of rumors, especially on social media. Always make sure the information comes from trusted agencies and organizations like your local government.
- Turn on Wireless Emergency Alerts notifications on your smartphone.
- For more ways to stay informed, [click here](#).

Stay in Contact:

- Send text messages to your family, friends, and out-of-town contacts. In many cases, text messages will go through when a phone call may not.
- Update your social media statuses and feeds with information about your location and well-being after an emergency.
- Limit your phone calls to only critical communications, so you conserve battery life and keep the lines open for emergency communications.
- For more ways to stay in contact, [click here](#).

Create Community

Social connectedness is an important way to respond to and recover from an emergency. People are more empowered to help one another after a disaster when community members have been regularly involved in each other's lives. Simple things, such as getting to know your neighbors and finding out who might need help in a disaster, learning practical preparedness skills, and assisting others in an emergency, can help create community.

Care for Each Other:

- Talk to a friend or family member about your feelings. Seek professional help if feelings of stress, anxiety, and grief persist for several days or affect your ability to complete everyday tasks.
- Continue with your treatment plans if you have a mental health condition and monitor for any new symptoms.
- Responders—Work in teams to limit your time working alone and help prevent and reduce burnout and secondary traumatic stress.
- Check on your neighbors in an emergency, especially, those who are pregnant, elderly, live alone, have a disability or chronic disease, depend on electric-powered medical equipment, or may need help in an evacuation.
- For more ways to care for each other, [click here](#).

Get involved:

- Join a local Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Unit or Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

- Contact your state and local public health departments to help with a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) or participate in readiness exercises.
- Give blood.
- For more ways to get involved, [click here](#).

Contact Us

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Questions?

[Contact CDC-INFO](#)

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