

# DISASTER TIP SHEET

## HURRICANES AND TROPICAL STORMS



### PREPARING YOUR HEALTH FOR HURRICANES

- Fill prescriptions on time or ahead of time, if you can**
  - Call your pharmacist to ask if your prescriptions can be filled early
  - When filling prescriptions at the pharmacy, use mail-order delivery or call in your prescriptions ahead of time, and use drive-thru or curbside pickup options when available.
  - View Healthcare Ready's blog on the refill-too-soon laws by state: [HealthcareReady.Org/A-Review-of-State-Emergency-Prescription-Refill-Protocols](https://www.healthcareready.org/blog/review-of-state-emergency-prescription-refill-protocols)
- Keep a "go-bag" of emergency supplies ready, including your medications**
  - Suggested items: first aid kit, flashlight, portable radio, NOAA weather radio, batteries, whistle, blankets, important documents, cash if possible, and [supplies to protect you and others](#) from COVID-19 including multiple masks for everyone 2 years and older, soap and disinfectant wipes
  - Pack all medications in a resealable, waterproof bag
- Try to keep non-perishable food, water, and can openers on hand**
  - Go for canned meats, fruits and vegetables that are ready to eat and can be used in a [renal diet](#)
  - Protein bars, cereal, granola, and dried fruit are great snacks to have
  - If possible, try to keep some food, water, and can openers in your "go-bag"
- Fully charge your electronic devices, and pack spare batteries and chargers**
  - To conserve battery: limit the use of unnecessary apps and switch your phone to low-power mode when fully charged
- Keep a list of your local healthcare facilities, with addresses, phone numbers, and emails/ websites**
  - Consider these facilities:
    - Hospitals/ERs
    - Pharmacies
    - Urgent care clinics
    - Ancillary care:
      - Dialysis Centers, Cancer Treatment Centers
    - COVID-19 Testing Centers
- Have an evacuation plan**
  - Use your state emergency management agency and [RedCross.org/Shelters](https://www.redcross.org/shelters) to find local shelters
  - Identify back-up locations, such as the homes of loved ones or motels
  - If you have pets, look for places that accept pets
  - Plan several routes to your alternative locations
  - Use [RxOpen.org](https://www.rxopen.org) to locate pharmacies near your alternative location
  - Follow the instructions of local officials
  - Have a communication and reunification plan with everyone in your home

- If you are unable to evacuate, alert local emergency management officials and your loved ones or caretakers
  - If you need to stay at a shelter or evacuate, practice [COVID-19 public shelter safety precautions](#) and general [COVID-19 safety precautions](#) on transportation like wearing a mask, washing hands often with soap and water, and staying six feet apart from others.
  - Pay close attention to local guidelines about updated evacuation plans and emergency sheltering.
- Make sure you know your prescription medication and health information - use [Rx on the Run](#) to keep a list of your prescriptions**
- [Rx on the Run](#) is a personalized wallet-sized card that lists your prescriptions with the latest dosage and instructions
  - Visit [HealthcareReady.org/Rx-on-the-Run](https://HealthcareReady.org/Rx-on-the-Run) to fill yours out!
- Plan for any chronic conditions you may have**
- **Diabetes:** Talk to your pharmacist about keeping a supply of insulin on hand - Try to refrain from eating sugar and other carbohydrates
  - **Kidney disease:** Make sure you have access to dialysis treatment and use the [renal diet](#)
  - **Cardiovascular disease & hypertension:** Try to refrain from high-salt and fatty food and aim for 30 minutes of activity a day to manage your blood pressure
- **Pulmonary disease:** Work with your supplier to understand options for keeping resupplies of oxygen with you
  - **Disability:** Develop alternative transportation plans and identify a trusted caretaker if necessary
  - **Aging:** Post emergency numbers near every house phone and cellular phone
  - **Asthma:** Have a plan to ensure you have a supply of your asthma medications and supplies
  - **Cancer:** If you have a [cancer survivorship care plan](#), keep a copy handy and take steps to lower your risk for infections
- Keep a list of helpful hotlines**
- Healthcare Ready: 1-866-247-2694
  - FEMA Disaster Assistance Helpline: 1-800-621-3362
  - Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 (or text "TalkWithUS" to 66746)
  - Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER): 1-866-901-3773
  - Red Cross: 1-800-733-2767
  - American Diabetes Association: 1-800-342-2283
  - American Heart Association: 1-800-242-8721
  - American Association of People with Disabilities: 1-800-840-8844
  - American Stroke Association: 1-888-478-7653

## PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH DURING A HURRICANE

- Make sure your medications remain stable**
- Some medicines must remain within a certain temperature range
  - Tip: insulin can remain stable between 59°F and 86°F for up to 28 days<sup>1</sup>
- Use [RxOpen.org](#) to find open pharmacies near you**
- Beware of floodwater contaminants**
- Do not drink floodwater

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/emergency-preparedness-drugs/information-regarding-insulin-storage-and-switching-between-products-emergency>

- Do not cook, clean, or brush teeth with floodwater
  - Do not use medication or eat food that has been contaminated with floodwater
  - Cover open wounds and limit exposure to floodwater, especially if you have cancer or are otherwise immunocompromised
- Drink plenty of bottled water and avoid skipping meals or eating spoiled food**
- Eat nutrient-rich, non-perishable foods such as fruits and vegetables
- Perishable foods in the refrigerator will be unsafe to eat after 4 hours without power
  - Use dry or block ice to keep your refrigerator cold for longer or use an extra cooler
- Recognize symptoms of food- or waterborne-illness**
- If you experience vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain, contact a healthcare provider immediately
- Do not run gas-powered generators, grills, or heaters indoors (Gas build up can be lethal!)**

## RECOVERING AFTER A HURRICANE

- Dispose of food and medicine that may have spoiled or been contaminated with floodwater**
- Without power, perishable foods only last for 4 hours in the refrigerator and 24-48 hours in the freezer
- Check home for mold, gas leaks, and insects**
- Mold can cause irritation and inflammation of existing respiratory conditions, like asthma
  - Poisonous and disease-carrying insects are more common after floods
- Disinfect cooking and eating surfaces**
- Use boiling water or a solution of one-tablespoon bleach to one-gallon clean water to clean pots, pans, countertops, dishes and silverware
- Use caution when cleaning up debris and don't overexert yourself**
- Always wear gloves, masks, and protective eyewear, and beware of glass, nails, and other sharp objects
  - If you are cut or scraped, clean and disinfect the wound thoroughly and keep it covered, especially if you have cancer or are otherwise immunocompromised
- Contact family and friends to let them know you are safe**
- Check in on your loved ones that may need support
  - Use text messages instead of phone calls because phone lines might be down
  - When checking up on friends and family, don't forget to continue practicing [COVID-19 safety precautions](#) like wearing a mask, washing hands often with soap and water, and staying six feet apart from others.
- Check with your health insurance provider for emergency support resources and hotlines**
- Start by calling the number on the back of your insurance card for assistance
  - If you don't have insurance, call 2-1-1 and ask about local services that may be able to help
  - If there is a disaster declaration, you can also try to apply for FEMA Disaster Assistance for financial support by calling 800-621-3362 or visiting [DisasterAssistance.gov](#)