

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
 - 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/A-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, sanitation items, important documents, and cash if possible
 - 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
- 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
- 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://www.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 days¹

Use [RxOpen.org](#) to find open pharmacies near you

Beware of floodwater contaminants

- Do not drink floodwater
- 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

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

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

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](https://www.fema.gov/disaster-assistance)