

The title "Flood Preparedness" is written in large white font on a dark blue background. A yellow horizontal bar is positioned above the word "Flood". The background image shows a row of houses under a dark, stormy sky.

Flood Preparedness

Health-focused guidance for people affected by flash floods, river flooding, and hurricane storm surge.

Flooding is the most common and costly natural disaster in the U.S., and it can happen with little warning. Protecting your health — not just your home — starts with a plan. Use this checklist to prepare before, during, and after a flood.

01**BEFORE**

Know your zone, build your go-bag, protect medications.

02**DURING**

Move to higher ground, stay out of floodwater, stay reachable.

03**AFTER**

Return safely, replace medications, watch for mold and stress.

6"

Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Turn around, don't drown.

7

Days of medication to keep sealed in a waterproof bag in your go-bag.

01 PHASE ONE Before the flood

- Know your **flood zone and evacuation routes**, and sign up for local emergency alerts and flood warnings.
- Keep an updated list of **medications, dosages, and allergies**. Use Healthcare Ready's Rx on the Run to track your prescriptions and access them anywhere.
- Pack copies of **insurance cards, IDs, and medical records** in a waterproof folder.
- If you have a disability or mobility need, or care for an older adult, identify **accessible transportation and shelter** in advance and register with your local or state registry for evacuation assistance.
- Create a **family communication plan**, including one out-of-area contact everyone can check in with.
- Stock **bottled water and purification supplies** (tablets or unscented bleach) in case tap water becomes unsafe.
- Build a **Go-Bag** with a 7-day supply of medications, sealed in a resealable, waterproof bag.
- Maintain a list of **local healthcare facilities** — hospitals, pharmacies, and dialysis or infusion centers — with addresses and phone numbers.
- Move medications, medical equipment, and documents to a **high, dry location** in case water enters your home.
- Plan for **pets and service animals** — keep vaccination records handy, since many shelters require proof.
- Charge phones and battery packs, and keep **backup power** ready for oxygen concentrators, CPAP machines, or refrigerated medications like insulin.

FOR KIDS

Pack a small go-bag for each child with comfort items (a favorite toy or blanket), snacks, and a card listing emergency contacts, allergies, and medications.



START HERE

Rx on the Run stores your medication list securely and works offline.

healthcareready.org/rxontherun

02 PHASE TWO

During the flood

Turn Around, Don't Drown

Never walk, swim, or drive through floodwater. Just six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet — and a foot of water can float a car.

- Move to **higher ground immediately** if instructed — don't wait for a mandatory order if water is rising near you.
- Bring your **Go-Bag**, medications, medical equipment, mobility devices, and important documents.
- Keep **open wounds covered** and minimize skin contact with floodwater — it can carry bacteria, chemicals, and sewage.
- Use **text messages** instead of calls — texts often get through when networks are overloaded.
- Can't find an open pharmacy? Check **Rx Open** for up-to-date pharmacy and dialysis center status.
- Follow **official evacuation routes** and instructions from local authorities; avoid shortcuts.
- Do not drink or cook with floodwater. Use bottled water, or **boil or disinfect for at least one minute**.
- Turn off **utilities** (gas, water, electricity) only if instructed and it is safe to do so.
- At a shelter, tell staff about **medical conditions, equipment, or medication needs** right away.

FOR KIDS

Keep children away from floodwater at all times — even calm, shallow-looking water can hide strong currents, debris, or contamination.



After the flood & returning home

- Wait for **official confirmation** that it is safe to return before heading home.
- **Refill or replace medications** that were lost, damaged, or expired — many pharmacies can provide emergency refills without a prescription during a declared disaster.
- Inspect your home for **mold, structural damage, and gas leaks** before staying inside — mold can worsen asthma and other respiratory conditions.
- Avoid contact with floodwater during cleanup — wear **rubber boots, gloves, and eye protection**.
- Follow up with your provider if you **missed treatments, dialysis sessions, or doses**.
- If you experienced losses, apply for **FEMA Disaster Assistance** at DisasterAssistance.gov or 1-800-621-3362.

4 hrs

Throw out refrigerated food after 4 hours without power.

24–48 hrs

Discard frozen food after 24–48 hours without power.

1 tbsp

Bleach per gallon of clean water to clean hard surfaces.

THROW IT OUT

Discard any food, water, or medication that touched floodwater — including sealed containers that were submerged. Replacing a prescription is far safer than using a contaminated one.

EMOTIONAL RECOVERY

Watch for stress, anxiety, or trauma in yourself and family members. Kids may show it through behavior changes, trouble sleeping, or new fears — keep routines steady and reassure them. Reaching out for support is a sign of strength.

Disaster Distress Helpline • 1-800-985-5990

Managing care through a flood

Diabetes

Pack extra insulin and supplies in a waterproof bag. Without refrigeration, insulin can generally remain stable between **59–86°F** for up to **28 days**.

Dialysis & kidney disease

Know your dialysis center's emergency plan and ask about **sister facilities** near your evacuation destination. KHARES kidney support: 866-446-3507.

Asthma & COPD

Pack inhalers, nebulizers, and a battery backup for equipment. Watch for **mold exposure** after flooding, which can trigger symptoms.

Cardiovascular conditions

Bring a full medication list and recent records if possible, and **avoid overexertion** during floodwater cleanup.

Immunocompromised

Pack masks, hand sanitizer, and an extra medication supply. **Avoid all contact with floodwater** — even small cuts carry infection risk.



Help you can use today

Rx on the Run

Securely store your medication list and share it with any pharmacist or provider, even offline.

healthcareready.org/rxontherun

Rx Open

Up-to-date map of open pharmacies and dialysis centers near you during an active disaster.

healthcareready.org/rxopen

Alert Hub

Situation reports and threat updates for active disasters as they develop.

healthcareready.org/alert-hub

KEY CONTACTS

Healthcare Ready Support	alerts@healthcareready.org	FEMA Disaster Assistance	1-800-621-3362
Disaster Distress Helpline	1-800-985-5990	Local help & services (if uninsured)	2-1-1
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222	KHARES kidney/dialysis support	866-446-3507
American Red Cross	1-800-733-2767	American Diabetes Association	1-800-342-2383
American Heart Association	1-800-242-8721	American Stroke Association	1-888-478-7653
Am. Assoc. of People with Disabilities	1-800-840-8844		