

Emergency preparedness kit



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As we all know, it is hurricane season, and between the hurricanes and the dangerous, crazy storms that come out of nowhere and catch us by surprise, sisters and brothers, we need to be prepared.

Disasters and emergencies can happen at any time. Preparing for a disaster can reduce the fear, anxiety and losses that disasters cause. A disaster can be a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, tornado, flood or earthquake. It might also be man-made, such as a bioterrorist attack or chemical spill. You should know the risks and danger signs of different types of disasters.

You should also have a disaster plan. Be ready to evacuate your home and know how to treat basic medical problems. Make sure you have the insurance you need, including special types, such as flood and flood content insurance.

Below is information to help with your emergency readiness. This information will help you build a disaster supply kit. Once you have planned for the safety of yourself, your family and your possessions, you will have peace of mind and be able to help others. Every family is different, and each will have its own needs and concerns. As you prepare your kit, consider any unique needs, including mobility, disability, special needs and other medical needs for your family.

Preparations for natural and man-made disasters are similar in some ways. Make sure your emergency kit is stocked with the items on the checklist below. It is important to have an emergency supply kit, a communication plan, plans for your records, plans for each family member and plans for your pets. Defining your risk will help you develop an appropriate preparedness plan.

After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days. Being prepared means having food, water and other supplies to last for at least 72 hours. A disaster kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.

To assemble a disaster kit, store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers, such as plastic bins or a duffel bag.

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items (not limited to):

- Water—one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food—at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA weather radio with tone alert
- Flashlight

- First aid kit
- Face mask
- Hand sanitizer
- Extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Manual can opener for food
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

You may also want to add these additional emergency supplies to your kit based on your individual needs:

- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication or antacids
- Glasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate, and sturdy shoes
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper to disinfect water
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

You should maintain your kit. Store your kit in a cool, dry place. You will also want to make sure your boxed food is in a tightly closed plastic or metal container. Remember to replace items that are expired as needed.

Just remember that your disaster kit and plan should include scenarios for different types of disasters.

I suggest that everyone get some kind of weather or emergency alert system. Find tools and information to help get your home, family and business ready to deal with disasters and emergencies.

You may want to rethink and update your kit to meet your family's needs. Natural or man-made disasters can cause emotional distress. Recovery can take time. If you are affected by a natural disaster, please contact the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation at 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or DisasterReliefFoundation@nalc.org, or visit the website at nalc.org/disaster.