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## Preparing for Natural Disasters: A Survival Plan for Persons With Diabetes

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Most of us are familiar with natural (and other) disasters that have occurred around the world and in our own communities. Hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, power outages, and industrial accidents have the potential to seriously threaten our lives, our families, and our homes. Survivors often become isolated in their homes—without gas and electrical utilities, or any means of refrigeration, communication, or transportation. The burden of such a disaster is made even more complicated by having to cope with a chronic illness such as diabetes.

Preparation and organization are the keys to dealing with disasters successfully, whether you stay at home or evacuate to an emergency shelter or other safe area. Below are some general tips for planning ahead:

- Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes and the closest emergency shelters. Find out what items you are expected to bring.
- Have a neighborhood and family-action plan for communication (eg, who's been hurt), meals, and other essentials. For instance, you and

your neighbor may be able to share a generator, water supply, or meals.

- Explore local resources such as County Extension Service, state/local health agencies, and disaster relief committees set up by local hospitals for region-specific advice on earthquake, flood, tornado, hurricane, etc, preparedness).

### Emergency Supplies

**Nonfood Supplies** You should have a number of items on hand at *all* times for emergencies. These include:

- Grill, portable gas stove, sterno, or other cooking apparatus, including appropriate fuel
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Water: 1 gal/day/person for at least 1 week
- Bleach for cleaning and for water purification

To purify water, add chlorine bleach (the bleach should contain 5.25% sodium hypochlorite as its active ingredient) to water in these proportions: 8 drops of bleach to every gallon of clean water (do *not* use scented bleach). Stir or shake, then let water stand for 30 minutes before using. You can also find water purification tablets in sporting or camping goods stores.

- Wicks
- Batteries
- Portable radio
- Cleaning supplies (large quantities)
- Disinfectant
- Detergent
- Disposable plates, cups, bowls, tableware
- Toilet tissue
- Paper towels
- Candles and safety holders
- Garbage bags
- Manual can opener
- First-aid kit
- Journal, notebook, writing utensil
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- 1-quart container
- Waterproof container for medications

*If children (and/or bored adults) are in the household:*

- Playing cards
- Games not requiring electricity

*If pets are in the household:*

- 1 week's supply of pet food
- Litter

*If a baby is in the household:*

- 2 week's supply of formula
- Wipes
- Disposable diapers (week's supply)
- Typical baby needs

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