



# 5 Steps to Ready

The effects of climate change are here, and so are the health challenges caused by extreme weather. These health challenges call for a change in the way we respond. Use this document to prepare for hurricanes now, when there is time. During a disaster, you might have only minutes to make decisions. Act now so you and your family can stay safe.

## 1. Make a plan

- Identify meet-up locations and people you will need to contact.
- Put the list of contacts in your wallet, on your phone and somewhere visible in your house.

## 2. Build a kit

- Store enough non-perishable food and water for at least three days. Be sure to include the needs of pets and those with special diets.
- Consider buying a pre-made kit if it will meet your needs.

## 3. Keep at least seven days of medication on hand

- Work with your pharmacist and insurance company to secure the extra doses.

## 4. Make copies of important documents

- In addition to health insurance and prescription information, people should have identification information (drivers license, passport, birth certificate, or social security card), and financial information (insurance policies, bank account records, copy of real estate deed).
- Keep these on your phone, in the cloud or on a USB memory stick.

## 5. Stay informed

- Stay up-to-date on local weather forecasts during hurricane season.
- Learn about local hazards (such as flood zones, landslide areas, etc.) unique to your local geography.
- Consider taking courses such as CPR and First Aid, Stop the Bleed, or Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).
- Sign up for your county or city emergency alert system. Signing up can often be found via your local emergency management office. An early warning can give you the minutes you need to prepare for a fast-moving disaster.
- Learn more at [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

# Tips for putting your plan into action

Disasters can change everything.

## Communication could be difficult:

- Text messages can often get through when phone calls can't due to network congestion or weak signals. They require less bandwidth and can be queued for delivery when the signal is intermittent.
- If you have school-age children, know the school's response plan, including where they will evacuate and how they will communicate with caregivers.
- Identify a contact out of state to communicate through; often messages out of state will travel faster than local ones.

## You may need to shelter in place or leave your home:

- Locate and mark the gas, water and power shut-offs to your house. Tape a wrench in a bag to the gas shutoff for easy access in an emergency.
- When making a kit, make sure to pack foods that your family will enjoy and don't forget a can opener. Once a year, check to ensure foods are not expired.
- If you need to shelter in place and do not have a storm shelter, identify a safe room away from exterior windows. If your home has multiple levels, ensure you have unobstructed access in case of flooding.
- If possible, avoid contact with flood water. Flood waters can hide dangers from sharp debris and infectious diseases to deep holes and electrocution.
- When storing emergency water, ensure you have enough for each person (1 gallon of water per person per day) and your pets.
- If asked to evacuate by local authorities, do so quickly. It is always better to evacuate earlier than too late when it may be difficult and dangerous to leave your home. Know evacuation routes. These may be available on county or city websites.
- Make your kit portable, so you can move easily if you need to. A small kit might fit in a backpack; for a larger kit, you might need a container with wheels.
- Store the batteries of electronics (such as phones and radios) separate from the devices to prevent them from being drained in storage..
- Know evacuation routes. Understand local hazards such as flood zones.
- Keep paper maps in your kit, as neighborhoods look very different when they have been damaged, and landmarks you rely on may be gone.

## Disasters can happen anywhere:

- Look up potential hazards when going on vacation. Consider asking locals, such as hotel staff or the property manager, for additional information on local hazards and how to respond.

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