



Are You Prepared at Home?

As a public health worker, you may be called upon to respond to a disaster. Developing a family disaster plan is as important as developing emergency plans for local, state, and national agencies. Your preparations should include plans for your household to activate if you are called to respond, especially if you may be away for an extended period.

What You Should Do to Prepare

Find out if you are expected to respond to an emergency and what your potential role may be. Be aware of the disasters that may affect where you live such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, ice storms, and other events. Find out what the emergency plans are at your place of work and what the plans are for your community. Find out if your child's school has a disaster plan and what that plan is.

Take the time now to review the adequacy of your property, health, and life insurance coverage. In case a disaster strikes, you do not want to be underinsured. If possible, try to refill your prescriptions at least a week or two before they run out. This may prevent problems if you cannot get to the pharmacy.

A family disaster plan consists of the following:

- Family communications plan
- Disaster supplies kit or "go-pack"
- Knowledge of evacuation routes to leave the area affected by the disaster
- How to shut off utilities
- Special plans for children and the elderly
- Special plans for pets

Make sure that everyone in your household knows the family disaster plan

Assembling a Disaster Supplies Kit or "Go-Pack"

Store your kit in a convenient place known to everyone in your family. It should be in an easy to carry container or bag. The supplies can be used whether your family stays at home or needs to evacuate. You may also want to keep a disaster kit in the trunk of your car.

Basic "Go-Pack" items include:

- At least a three day supply of water and food (one gallon of water per person per day);
- Important family documents
 - ◊ List of health problems and medications for each family member
 - ◊ Identification cards
 - ◊ Copies of wills
 - ◊ Household inventory
- Portable radio, flashlight and extra batteries;
- Basic first aid kit;
- Manual can opener and eating utensils;
- Ice packs
- Special needs items such as:
 - ◊ Non-prescription drugs
 - ◊ Personal hygiene and sanitation items, such as hand gel
 - ◊ Extra clothing and blankets

Make sure that your kit contains essential items for anyone in your household with special needs. Periodically rotate canned or dried food items to ensure that they are safe to eat. Do not store prescription medications in your kit because they can expire before you may need to use them.

Your Family Communication Plan

Have a contact plan that identifies where to go during an emergency and where the family will meet. Discuss who to call in an emergency. Select one local and one out-of-state person to contact during an emergency for anyone to call if your family becomes separated. Having an out-of-state person to contact may be beneficial if local communication circuits become overloaded. Make sure that you provide a way for your family to contact you when you are deployed to respond, and let them know where you will be. If possible, periodically contact your family to let them know you are safe.

Preparing for special needs

If you or a family member has a disability or special need, you may need to take additional steps:

- Find out about special assistance that may be available in your community.
- Register with your local emergency services, police or fire department.
- Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and coworkers to aid you in an emergency. Make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.
- Keep specialized items ready (wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals).
- Make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.

What to do for Pets

Talk to your veterinarian about evacuation and emergency care for your pets so that you know what to do to prepare. Many shelters do not allow pets. Find out if there are emergency animal shelters in your area. This will save time in figuring out what to do if you cannot take your pet with you if an evacuation is ordered. Make an animal disaster supplies kit. This should include items such as food, water, pet immunization records, collar and leash, and pet identification.

For more detailed information:

Preparedness Today: What You Need to Do. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and American Red Cross.

http://www.redcross.org/preparedness/cdc_english/CDC.asp

Connecticut Department of Public Health Preparedness and Response.

<http://www.dph.state.ct.us/bt/ready/btpdns-ephome.htm>

Pet friendly lodgings

www.petswelcome.com



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Mission: As part of a national network of Centers for Public Health Preparedness that are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Yale Center for Public Health Preparedness, based at the Yale School of Public Health, works to ensure that frontline public health workers are prepared to respond to public health emergencies including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and disease outbreaks.

*The purpose of this newsletter is to provide preparedness information to public health professionals.
If you have suggestions for future topics, please contact the Center at cphp@yale.edu*

To subscribe to this newsletter, please send an email to cphp@yale.edu with "public health" in the subject line.