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Always Be Prepared

History has shown us that being prepared for any type of disaster is crucial to survival.

This month's aide newsletter is focused on possible natural disasters that can occur more frequently at this time of year. Please take the time to read and study this newsletter so that you may be better prepared to help your patients and yourself develop a disaster plan. Also included is a checklist for you to help determine how prepared your patients are for a disaster. Remember—our best strategy for any disaster is to be prepared.

This newsletter could also be used to discuss disaster planning in your agency with your supervisor so that you will understand the agency's policies and procedures on disaster planning. We hope you find this newsletter helpful.



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Aide/ Nurse Checklist to Help Determine Patient's Disaster Preparedness

- ✓ Is there a medication list of all medicines that includes over the counter medicines.
- ✓ Is there a list of telephone numbers for emergency. Be sure at least one of them is for a contact outside of the disaster area. This should include; family, doctor, neighbors, etc.
- ✓ Is there a list with medical conditions listed, along with any medical treatments required by the patient?
- ✓ Does the patient have a "to go kit" for situations where one has to leave home for safety. A "to go kit" should include a change of clothes, medicines, medical equipment and supplies, food, water, toilet paper, flashlight, cash and coins, house keys.
- ✓ Are there labels on medical equipment with the patient's name on it?
- ✓ Are there extra batteries for flashlight?
- ✓ Are there supplies if the patient is forced to stay home due to disaster?
- ✓ The patient/family should stock food, water, flashlight, batteries, first aid kit, medications, extra medical supplies if needed, and a manual can opener.
- ✓ Has the patient/family notified the utility company of priority need for utilities if special medical equipment being utilized by patients such as ventilator, oxygen, dialysis, etc. Let your supervisor know.
- ✓ All lists and "to go kit" should be easily accessible for leaving in a hurry.
- ✓ Does the patient know where the nearest emergency shelter is located for patients with special needs?
- ✓ Patients should have important identification and insurance information easily accessible. (Patients/families should make copies and keep with other lists in a plastic bag).
- ✓ Make a sign that reads, "Evacuated" to leave on the front door in case of evacuation.

Are You Prepared For a Disaster?

-----What You Will Learn-----

After studying this material, you should:

- Be able to describe ways to prepare for hurricanes and tornadoes.
- Be able to describe dangers of thunderstorms and lightning, name numerous facts about them.
- Name safety precautions to take before and during a flood, describe how to prepare for evacuation and describe the danger of rushing and rising water.
- Name items that should be in a “go kit,” and items to have on hand for sheltering in place.

If You Are With a Patient When Disaster Strikes

- Stay calm and do not panic.
- Get the patient to a safe place—an interior room of the house is safest.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- Listen to the radio or TV for information.
- Do not leave the patient until it is safe to do so.

First Decide If....

You will be able to shelter at home or
if you will have to leave home (evacuate)

The enclosed information has been compiled from various state and federal disaster preparedness resources.

Sheltering In Place: What You Need to Know

Whether you are at home or elsewhere, there may be situations when it's simply best to stay where you are and avoid any uncertainty outside. Make sure to have a good household plan for what to do during a disaster.

For example, keep gas tanks full, store important documents and cash for easy accessibility, and have a property plot plan showing house floor plan with locations of exits, fire extinguishers, supplies and an outside meeting place. Consider what you can do to safely shelter-in-place alone or with friends, family or neighbors.



The “Nuts and Bolts” of Lightning Jolts: Things You Should Know About Lightning and Thunderstorms



Most of us have been taught to count “one- 1,000, two- 1,000, three- 1,000...” when we hear thunder, and depending on how many seconds we count determines how many miles the storm is away from us. Well, although that allows us to guess how far away the rain is, it doesn’t specify how far away the lightning is—which may often strike outside of heavy rain and can actually occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.

Due to lightning’s unpredictable nature, the risk of lightning strikes to individuals and property increases, but don’t lose sleep over it. Your chances of being struck by lightning are estimated to be one in 600,000, and could be reduced even further by following safety precautions—Make sure you are aware of your surroundings and the weather forecast, and plan accordingly. Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors in the summer months during the afternoon and evening, so if you enjoy the outdoors, keep that in mind.

Also remember that warm, humid conditions are highly favorable for thunderstorms, which typically produce heavy rain for a brief period of time—anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour or so. Just keep in mind these simple facts and don’t get caught “wet-handed!”

Remember:
Lightning strike victims carry no electrical charge. Attend to them *immediately!*

Do’s & Don’ts for Thunderstorms

DO’S

- Get inside a home, building, or hard top automobile (not a convertible). Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside. The steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades, or curtains.
- Unplug appliances and electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage

DON’T

Shower or bathe during a storm. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.

What to Have in Your Go-Bag

Put the following items together in a backpack or another easy to carry container in case you must evacuate quickly. Prepare one Go-bag for each family member and make sure each has an I.D. tag.

Medicine; Flashlight; Radio: battery operated; Batteries; Whistle; Dust Mask; Pocket knife; Emergency cash in small denominations and quarters for phone calls; Sturdy shoes, a change of clothes, and a warm hat; Local map; Some water and food; Permanent marker, paper and tape; Photos of family members and pets for re-identification ; List of emergency point-of-contact phone numbers; List of allergies to any drug (especially antibiotics) or food; Copy of health insurance and I.D. cards; Extra prescription eye glasses, hearing aid or other vital personal items; Toothbrush and toothpaste; Extra keys to your house and vehicle; Any special-needs items for children, seniors and/or people with disabilities; Don't forget to make a Go-bag for your pet.

Five Ways to Prepare for a Hurricane

1. Make plans to secure your property. Permanent storm shutters are the best protection for windows, or board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
2. Install straps or clips to secure your roof to the structure.
3. Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.
4. Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
5. Consider building a safe room.

Evacuation During a Hurricane

When You Should Evacuate

1. If you are directed by local authorities to do so. Be sure to follow their instructions. 2. If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure—such shelters are particularly hazardous during hurricanes no matter how well fastened to the ground. 3. If you live in a high-rise building—hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations. 4. If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an island waterway. 5. If you feel you are in danger.

If you are unable to evacuate

1. Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors. 2. Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors. 3. Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm—winds will pick up again. 4. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallways on the lowest level. 5. Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

Items to Include in Your First Aid Kit

In any emergency a family member or you may be injured. If you have these basic supplies you are better prepared to help yourself and your loved ones—not all injuries are life threatening, so knowing how to treat minor injuries can make a difference in an emergency.

- Two pairs Latex gloves, or other sterile gloves
- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding
- Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect
- Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection
- Burn ointment to prevent infection
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes
- Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontamination
- Thermometer
- Prescription medications
- Prescribed medical supplies
- Cell phone
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Anti-acid
- Laxative





Floods

Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States and can impact a neighborhood or community, or affect entire river basins and multiple states.

Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles!

However, all floods are not alike. Some floods develop slowly, sometimes over a period of days. But flash floods can develop quickly, sometimes in just a few minutes and without any visible signs of rain. Flash floods often have a dangerous wall of roaring water that carries rocks, mud, and other debris and can sweep away most things in its path.

Be aware of flood hazards no matter where you live, but especially if you live in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam. Even very small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds, or low-lying ground that appears harmless in dry weather can flood. Every state is at risk from this hazard.

During a Flood

Listen to the radio or television for information.

Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.

Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warnings as rain clouds or heavy rain.

After a Flood

- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.
- Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.
- Stay away from downed power lines, and report them to the power company.
- Avoid moving water. Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits and leaching systems as possible. Damaged sewage systems are serious health hazards.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may be weak and collapse.
- Clean and service vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups that got wet.

If you must prepare to evacuate, you should do the following:

Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.

Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.

Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely.

Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling. A foot of water will float many vehicles.



Topsy Turvy Tornadoes: Why These Twirling Towers of Terror Are Treacherous

Tornadoes may strike quickly, with little or no warning and are nature's most violent storms, which can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in seconds.

A tornado, which appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour, but the average forward speed of a tornado is 30 miles per hour, and could vary from stationary (staying in one place) to 70 miles per hour.

Damage paths of tornadoes can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Every state is at some risk from this hazard.

Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still. A cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible. Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.



Thing to do before a tornado...

- Be alert to changing weather conditions
- Look for danger signs: Dark, often greenish sky; Large hail; A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating); Loud roar, similar to a freight train
- If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

If you are inside a building...

- Go to a shelter such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls.

If you are outside with no shelter...

- Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding.
- Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.
- Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

Tornadoes are most likely to occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m., but can occur at any time!