

FAMILY CARE IN DISASTERS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TOPIC

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. Families can cope with disaster by creating a disaster plan. Knowing what to do is not only your responsibility, but is the best protection for your family.

GET INFORMED

- Call your local emergency management office or health department to find out what types of disasters are likely to occur in your area.
- Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Find out what warning system your community has in place. Subscribe to the alerting system to receive notifications to your cell phone.

PLAN

- Meet with your family and discuss the importance of preparing for a disaster.
 - ◊ Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather, and earthquakes to children.
 - ◊ Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to occur. Explain what to do in each case.
 - ◊ Discuss what to do in an evacuation.
- Plan how to take care of pets.
- Pick two places to meet:
 - ◊ Right outside your home in case of sudden emergency (e.g. fire).
 - ◊ Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone should know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state or out-of-town friend to be your "family contact" – after a disaster it's often easier to call long distance. All family members should know the contact's phone number.
- Inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time (work, daycare, school, etc.).
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Plan two exits from each room.
- Find safe spots in your home for different types of disasters.

ASSEMBLE SUPPLIES

- Create simple, one page emergency instructions and keep them updated. Include information on fire extinguishers, exits, and utility shut offs.
- Instruct each family member on how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main switches.
- Post emergency phone numbers by the telephone or in a common area (such as the refrigerator or kitchen cabinet).
- Teach children how and when to call 911.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt and correct the found hazards.
- Stock emergency supplies and prepare a disaster supplies kit.
 - ◊ Plan for 7-14 days of food, water, shelter in your kit
 - ◊ Don't forget to make an emergency kit for animals
 - ◊ Have fun items in your kit to occupy children

PRACTICE AND MAINTAIN

- Attend a basic first aid and CPR class
- **Every month** – Test your smoke alarms.
- **Every 6 months** – Go over family disaster plan and do escape drills. Quiz children.
- **Every year** – replace batteries in smoke alarms (unless your smoke alarm uses long-life batteries).
- **Every year** – Replace food items and water in your disaster kit (sooner if necessary due to storage conditions or expiration dates)

MORE INFORMATION

Familyvoices.org - Disasters and Emergencies: Keeping Children and Youth Safe

Gohsep.la.gov - Your Family Disaster Plan (pdf)

Healthychildren.org - How to Prepare for Disasters

Disastercenter.com - Why Talk About a Family Disaster Plan?