

Prepare for **HURRICANE SEASON** Advice From FDA

By knowing what actions to take, you can reduce the effects of hurricanes or other disasters. Here is some information from the Food and Drug Administration on how to keep food, medical products, and pets safe during an emergency.

FOOD

Food that has been exposed to flood waters or that hasn't been properly refrigerated can cause illness.

- When in doubt, throw it out. Don't eat food that may have been exposed to flood water.
- Use bottled water if it is available. Don't drink water that may have been exposed to flood water. If you don't have bottled water, boil water at a rolling boil for one minute to make it safe. *Follow these steps if you can't boil water:*
 - If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle, and draw off the clear water for disinfection with bleach.
 - Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops) of regular, unscented, liquid household bleach per each gallon of water. Stir it well and let it stand for at least 30 minutes before you use it.
 - Store disinfected water in clean containers with covers.



NASA

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. If the power goes out, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Your refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it's unopened. A full freezer will keep an adequate temperature for about 48 hours if the door remains closed.
- Use appliance thermometers. Thermometers should be in your refrigerator and freezer. When power is restored, check your freezer thermometer. If it reads 40 degrees Fahrenheit, the food is safe and may be refrozen. Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out no more than 4 hours and the door has remained closed.
- Be prepared—have coolers and ice or frozen gel packs. Coolers can help keep refrigerator food cold. If the power will be out for more than 4 hours, store foods that require

Discard any perishable foods—such as meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or leftovers—that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 2 hours or more.

refrigeration so they are in contact with ice or frozen gel packs. Purchase or make ice cubes and store in the freezer for use in the refrigerator or in a cooler. Freeze gel packs ahead of time for use in coolers.

- Throw out spoiled food. Discard any perishable foods—such as meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or leftovers—that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 2 hours or more.
- Thoroughly cook. Before eating refrigerated or frozen meat, poultry, fish or eggs while they are still at safe temperatures, thoroughly cook them to the proper temperature to destroy any foodborne bacteria that may be present. Keep in mind that perishable foods that are not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked.

For More Information

Returning Home After a Hurricane or Flood

www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm076993.htm

Food and Water Safety

www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm076881.htm

MEDICINE

If you are in an area that may flood, follow these steps:

- Keep your medication containers in zip-closed plastic bags. Store them in your home in a place less likely to flood.
- Keep a list of your medications. Be sure to include
 - the name of the medicine

- the dose of the medicine
- how frequently you take the medicine
- your doctor's name and phone number

- Take the bags and medications with you if you must evacuate.
- If a medication container falls into flood water, replace the medication.

But during an emergency, replacing your medicines may not be easy.

- If the container gets wet but it appears that flood water did not touch the medicine, then use the medication, but only until a replacement can be obtained.
- Do not use the medication if any pills were touched by flood water.
- Save the original containers.
- Contact your pharmacist or other health care professional for guidance.

If a hurricane strikes, people with diabetes may not be able to refrigerate their insulin.

- Replace the medication with a new supply. Temperature-sensitive drugs, like insulin, lose potency if not refrigerated, so they should be replaced with a new supply as soon as possible.
- Insulin products may be left unrefrigerated (between 59 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit) for up to 28 days and still maintain potency.
- Contact a hospital or other health care professional for guidance.

For More Information

Safe Drug Use After a Natural Disaster

www.fda.gov/Drugs/EmergencyPreparedness/ucm085200.htm

Insulin Storage and Switching Between Products in an Emergency
www.fda.gov/Drugs/EmergencyPreparedness/ucm085213.htm

MEDICAL DEVICES

In an emergency, follow these tips for the safe use of medical devices and equipment.

- Keep your medical device and supplies clean and dry.
- Seek emergency services immediately if you depend on your device to keep you alive.
- If possible, notify your local public health authority to request evacuation before bad weather occurs.
- Use battery-powered flashlights or lanterns rather than gas lights or torches when oxygen is in use. This lowers the risk of fire.
- Contact your distributor or device manufacturer if your device appears to be damaged or you need a backup device.
- Check all power cords and batteries to make sure they are not wet or damaged by water. If electrical circuits and electrical equipment have gotten wet, turn off the power at the main breaker.
- Never run a generator inside your home or garage unless the equipment has been professionally installed and vented.

For More Information

Medical Devices and Hurricanes
www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/Safety/EmergencySituations/ucm055987.htm

Medical Devices Requiring Refrigeration

www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/Safety/EmergencySituations/ucm056075.htm

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VACCINES AND OTHER BIOLOGICS

Most biological products, including bacterial and viral vaccines, allergenic extracts (for example, for allergy shots and tests), and blood products, require specific storage conditions to maintain their safety, purity, and potency. This type of information is indicated in the product labeling.

These products may often be found in health clinics, physicians' offices, and patients' homes where emergency backup power may not be available.

Here are some suggested actions to preserve cold or frozen storage conditions during a power outage:

Vaccines and Non-Blood Biologicals

- Note the time of the power outage and do not open freezers and refrigerators until power is restored. This will help conserve the cold mass of the products.
- Do not open units to check temperatures during a power outage, as many products will maintain their potency for a few days in a closed refrigerator.
- For vaccines requiring freezer storage, you may consider removing them from the freezer after one day (if the power outage continues) and packing them in dry ice. But if the vaccines are not cold to the touch upon removal from the freezer, you may wish to consider not using them.

Blood Products and Plasma Derivatives

Blood banks and plasma centers typically have backup generators and emergency procedures in place for storing products in the event of a

power outage. For those facilities or in-home users who may not have emergency backup power, the following may be helpful:

- There is some evidence that lyophilized coagulation products such as Factor VIII and Factor IX may be stored at room temperature for a fairly long period of time without loss of factor potency. If you are concerned about the exposure or effectiveness of a particular product, please contact the supplier or the manufacturer.
- Many immune globulin products are licensed for storage at 36 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit, and some products may be stored at room temperature for all or part of the time before expiration. Because storage temperatures and times are specific to each product, you should follow the package insert recommendations for Immune Globulin Intravenous (IGIV), intramuscular IG (IG), and subcutaneous IG (IGSC) products. Products requiring lower temperatures can be stored on wet ice. None of these products should be frozen.

TAKING CARE OF PETS

When a hurricane strikes, it's a dangerous situation for people AND pets.

- Try to take your pets with you if you leave home during an emergency.
- Plan in advance. Find out which motels or hotels accept pets in an emergency. Or, plan to go to the home of a friend or relative who will allow you to bring your pet.
- Prepare a disaster kit that you can grab as you leave home. The kit should include pet food, medicines,

vaccination records, and pet insurance information.

- Make arrangements for a neighbor or nearby friend to take care of your pets in case you get trapped away from home.
- Make sure your pets have identification tags (including rabies and license tags, if applicable.) This may help reunite you with your pets if you get separated. Identification tags should provide your name, home address, a phone number where you can be reached, and an out-of-state phone number of someone with whom you will be in contact during or soon after the disaster or evacuation.
- Have a leash, collar, or harness for your pets (cats and dogs) and pet carriers or transport kennels or cages for each pet.

For More Information

Taking Care of Pets

www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/ResourcesforYou/ucm047099.htm

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