

Diabetes Disaster Plan

Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast of the United States, leaving death, destruction and unprecedented personal and economic costs. People with diabetes and their health care professionals faced enormous challenges in the wake of this storm. Katrina taught us that people with diabetes must prepare in advance to be able to “weather” future storms and other disasters that can disrupt access to their diabetes care. The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists urges people with diabetes to make preparations now and suggests the following preparatory activities.

Prepare a portable diabetes disaster kit that is both insulated and waterproof containing the following items:

- List of all medical conditions and prior surgeries.
- Information about your diabetes including past and present medications, any adverse reactions to medications, and past and present complications.
- List of all your health care professionals with their contact information.
- Letter from your diabetes health care professionals detailing most recent diabetes medication regimen (especially for insulin) and containing most recent laboratory results.
- List of all medications which should also include pharmacies and active prescription information and eligible refills.
- A 30 day supply of medications for diabetes and all other medical conditions. This should include insulin, oral antidiabetic agents and glucagon emergency kit (if prescribed by your physician).
- Blood glucose testing supplies including lancets, test strips and preferably at least two glucose meters with extra batteries.
- A cooler and at least four refreezable gel packs for storing insulin (do not use dry ice when storing your medication). Empty plastic bottles and/or sharps container for syringes, needles, and/or lancets.
- Source of carbohydrate to treat hypoglycemic reactions (e.g. glucose tablets). Ideally should also have one or two day’s supply of food that does not require refrigeration (e.g. non-perishable).
- At least a 3 day supply of bottled water.
- Pen and/or pencil and notepad to record blood glucoses and any other test results and any new signs/symptoms suggesting medical problems.
- Additional medical/first aid supplies like bandages, cotton swabs, dressings, and topical medications (antibiotic ointments or creams) to treat cuts or abrasions.

Other recommendations:

- Wear shoes at all times and examine your feet often for infection.
- Make sure that all immunizations including tetanus are updated.
- Pack extra comfortable clothing including undergarments.
- Take a cellular phone with extra charged batteries for you and family members.
- Consider choosing a designated meeting place in case you are separated from your family and unable to reach them by phone.

