

# ARE YOU READY?

## The importance of preparedness

Disasters can strike at any time, putting you, your family and your community in danger. Public health emergencies — including tornadoes, floods, storms, earthquakes, pandemic flu or other emerging infectious diseases — disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. That's why it's important to be prepared year-round.



### General pointers to keep in mind:

Although local government and disaster relief organizations will try to help you in the wake of an emergency, assistance might not come right away. It's up to you to prepare yourself and your family so you can stay safe.

Depending on the emergency, you may be told to shelter in place or evacuate to keep safe. Sheltering in place means taking immediate shelter wherever you are, whether it's at home, work, school or in transit. On the other hand, sometimes it's too dangerous to be where you normally would be and you must evacuate immediately. In either situation, it's important to follow instructions from local officials. If you are ordered to stay at home, you may be without electricity, refrigeration, clean tap water or phone services for days or weeks. That is why it's important to have an emergency stockpile.

### What do I need for preparedness?

All Americans should have at least a three-day supply of food and water stored in their homes, with at least one gallon of water per person per day. Your stockpile should also contain flashlights, a manual can opener, a radio, batteries and copies of important documents. Depending on your family's needs, you may also need medical supplies, pet food, contact lens solution or diapers.



If you were ordered to evacuate, would you have everything you need to safely seek shelter? Packing an emergency "go-bag" for home, school, work and your car will help you be

more prepared when you're on the move. These bags should include items like food, water, prescriptions and extra clothing.

When evacuating, it's important that you know where to go and how to get there. Learn about your community's evacuation routes and shelters ahead of time and see if they can accommodate your family's needs. If you have pets, for example, find a shelter where they will be welcome.



## Involve the community

Preparedness can go beyond individuals and their families — it can extend to the entire community. Seniors, people with disabilities and pregnant women and families with small infants may not be as well-equipped to handle an emergency situation. Community preparedness can help reach people who are most vulnerable and make disaster responses even stronger. Increasing awareness about the importance of preparedness can save lives, build resiliency and reduce the impact of disasters.

Education is a powerful tool. By informing everyone about the importance of hand-washing and vaccines, communities can avoid getting sick from disease outbreaks. Emergency preparedness can be incorporated in school curriculums, the workplace and the community.

### Image credits

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