Evacuation Disaster Kit

Disasters happen anytime and anywhere. Is your family prepared to cope with an emergency? Could you evacuate quickly? You need to prepare now, before a disaster strikes. Put together a disaster supplies kit. When you’ve gathered supplies, discuss an emergency plan. Then you will be better able to endure an evacuation if it becomes necessary.

Preparing the Kit

Use the following as a guide to see what supplies your family will need for a lengthy stay in a shelter. Remember most shelters just provide shelter only. It may not have other supplies. Pack water, snack foods, sanitation supplies (diapers, toilet tissue, feminine hygiene products), and any special foods or medicines, like insulin, heart tablets, diabetics food or baby foods.

To make a stay in a shelter more comfortable, also take bedding (sleeping bag, blanket, and pillow), extra clothing, eating utensils, flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries, reading materials, and games that will help pass the time. Keep items that are most likely needed during an evacuation in an easy to carry container such as a large, covered trash container, a camping backpack, or duffel bag.

Water is the most important item. Store water in a plastic container, such as clean soft drink bottles, and avoid using containers that contaminate the water, decompose, or break. To keep stored water fresh, change it every 6 months. A normally active person needs to drink at least 2 quarts of water each day. If it’s hot and you are very active, you need twice as much. Children, nursing mothers, and sick people will need more also. Store at least 1 gallon of water per person per day (2 quarts for drinking and 2 quarts for food preparation, washing dishes and bathing) Two gallons per person is better.

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Food - Keep a 2-week supply of nonperishable food at home in case of a disaster. Select food that requires no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. Rotate the food with newly purchased food supplies to ensure freshness. Make sure you purchase foods that you and your family like, as well as foods that have a long shelf-life. Because they contain liquids, canned fruit, vegetables, and fruit juices are excellent choices.

Clothing - Pack at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

Emergency supplies -
- Cash and/or traveler’s checks
- Battery operated radio and extra batteries
- Cameras to document damage
- Paper and pencil

Important Family Documents - Even if you do not need family records during an evacuation, they must be protected. Records are difficult to replace and may delay insurance claims or other important matters. You will need information about income debts, insurance, and other financial data to apply for certain kinds of assistance. Keep these records in a waterproof, fireproof, portable container, and store copies of each in a separate, safe location. Records you may consider would be: wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds, passports, social security cards, and immunization records, bank account numbers, credit card account numbers and companies, inventory of valuable household goods, and important telephone numbers.

Summary - Remember to include the basics: water, food, clothing and bedding, emergency supplies, and special items. Keep the items you need during an evacuation in an easy to carry container, like a covered trash container, a campus backpack, or a duffel bag.

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Pre-Disaster Preparations

Don’t be reluctant to talk with your family about the possibility of a hurricane, fire, tornado, or flood. Thought and action before the disaster hits usually helps family members react wisely. Families that work together to prepare for the problem will cope better than those who do not take precautions. Consider how your children might react in a disaster, how you might react, and how the crisis could affect each person’s emotional and physical well-being. Make plans in advance for how to deal with a crisis situation.

For the Entire Family
- Make emergency plans.
- Discuss and practice plans with your family before a disaster strikes.
- Work together to help children or other dependents understand procedures.

These steps will allow each family member to think through a potential crisis situation without the tension of a real emergency.

For Children
- Give children exact steps to follow. Talking, practicing, and actively preparing together will help children understand strange occurrences like a hurricane.
- Help children practice 911.
- Read news stories of family or community problems and emergencies. Talk about how your family would handle the situation.

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• Play let’s pretend with preschoolers. Discuss a situation that might arise in your area and then ask, “What would you do?”

Involving children in preparation for and carrying out emergency plans. All children need and want to carry out important roles. This helps them feel a part of the family and prepares them to cope with later situations.

For Older Adults
• If you have older or disabled relatives living at home, review emergency procedures with them.
• If special transportation or assistance is necessary in an emergency, arrange this in advance.
• If a relative lives in a nursing home, discuss evacuation procedures with the staff and make needed plans.

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Building Healthy Families

Healthy Web Surfing for Health Information

What should you look for when evaluating the quality of health information on the Web?

Consider the source - Use recognized authorities. Know who is responsible for the content. Look for an "about us" page. Check to see who runs the site: is it a branch of the Federal Government, a non-profit institution, a professional organization, a health system, a commercial organization or an individual. There is a big difference between a site that says, "I developed this site after my heart attack" and one that says, "This page on heart attack was developed by health professionals at the American Heart Association." Web sites should have a way to contact the organization or webmaster.

Focus on quality - All Web sites are not created equal. Does the site have an editorial board? Is the information reviewed before it is posted? This information is often on the "about us" page, or it may be under the organization’s mission statement, or part of the annual report. See if the board members are experts in the subject of the site. For example, a site on osteoporosis whose medical advisory board is composed of attorneys and accountants is not medically authoritative. Find out who has written the information.

Be a cyberskeptic - Quackery abounds on the Web. Does the site make health claims that seem too good to be true? Does the information use deliberately obscure, "scientific" sounding language? Does it promise quick, dramatic, miraculous results? Is this the only site making these claims? Beware of claims that one remedy will cure a variety of illnesses, that it is a "breakthrough," or that it relies on a "secret ingredient." Use caution if the site uses a sensational writing style (lots of exclamation points, for example.) A health Web site for consumers should use simple language, not technical jargon.

Look for the evidence - Rely on medical research, not opinion. Does the site identify the author? Does it rely on testimonials? Look for the author of the information, either an individual or an organization. Good examples are "Written by Jane Smith, R.N.," or "Copyright 2003, American Cancer Society."

Check for currency - Look for the latest information. Is the information current? Look for dates on documents. A document on coping with the loss of a loved one doesn't need to be current, but a document on the latest treatment of AIDS needs to be current. Click on a few links on the site. If there are a lot of broken links, the site may not be kept up-to-date.

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Beware of bias - What is the purpose? Who is providing the funding? Who pays for the site? Check to see if the site is supported by public funds, donations or by commercial advertising. Advertisements should be labeled. They should say "Advertisement" or "From our Sponsor."

Protect your privacy - Health information should be confidential. Does the site have a privacy policy and tell you what information they collect? There should be a link saying "Privacy" or "Privacy Policy." Read the privacy policy to see if your privacy is really being protected. For example, if the site says "We share information with companies that can provide you with useful products," then your information isn't private. You may start receiving all types of advertising.

Consult with your health professional - Patient/provider partnerships lead to the best medical decisions.

Source: Medline Plus

Fostering Resiliency for Families in Transition

How to Avoid Identity Theft Class

When: Wednesday, October 4, 2006
12:00 (noon) - 1:00 p.m.

Where: Powell-Melvin Agriculture Service Center
450 Smith Circle Drive
Elizabethtown, NC

Bonnie Cannady of the State Employee Credit Union will teach you how to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft and other forms of fraud.

Please bring a bag lunch and join us!

North Carolina Cooperative Extension
North Carolina State University
Bladen County Center
450 Smith Circle Drive
PO Box 249
Elizabethtown, NC 28337