



# Family Ties

## Dealing with Emergencies

Family and Consumer Science

Human Development

## PREPARING YOUR CHILDREN FOR EMERGENCIES

By: Denise J. Brandon, Ph. D., Parenting and Family Relations Specialist

Parents may have a hard time deciding how much to tell children about emergencies they may face. Parents may worry that giving too much information will cause their children to become fearful. However, not having enough information can lead to panic when a real emergency happens. What should parents do?



First, parents should reassure their children that they will do everything in their power to keep them safe. Having a plan is one way to help keep them safe in an emergency. These are some general tips to help families plan for emergencies:

- Plan safe escape routes from your home in case of fire or flood.
- Set a meeting place outside the house where everyone will meet in case fire or other disaster requires them to escape.
- Practice using the fire escape routes you have planned and meeting in the agreed upon spot.
- Designate a person outside the home (maybe in another city or state) that family members

will call if they become separated from each other in an emergency.

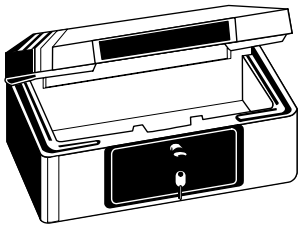
- Decide on the safest place in your house in the event of a tornado. Make sure that all family members know to meet there if they hear a tornado warning for your area or see a tornado.
- Have supplies on hand for emergencies such as power outages. For a list of things to put in a disaster supply kit, see <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/fds-all.pdf>. If you have young children, a toy such as a stuffed teddy bear should be included in your emergency supply kit.
- Don't forget your pets as you prepare for emergencies. Having a plan for their animal friends can bring comfort to children. Go to <http://www.hsus.org/ace/11474> for more information on emergency plans for pets.

Though most of us don't like to talk about potential disasters, having a plan can relieve stress both before and during a disaster. Preparing your children for potential disasters can relieve their stress as well.

# Assembling a Safe Box Ahead of Time Can Speed Disaster Recovery

Dena Wise, Associate Professor, Family & Consumer Sciences

In disaster preparedness, it's important to plan ahead for the contingency of having to leave your home unexpectedly. In case your home is destroyed, it's also important to have a plan for survival for the first few days. Assembling a "safe box" of essential items to be stored away from home is an activity that can save hours of work and frustration if disaster strikes.



When families are recovering from disaster, one of the most time consuming tasks they may face is replacing lost or destroyed legal documents.

To protect against loss of this information, every family should have copies of important papers and records stored outside the home. A little thought to how you might function after a disaster can help you think of important items to put in a safe box. Here are some suggestions:

## Items for Immediate Personal Care

- Enough cash to live on for a few days
- Spare keys to your autos and home
- Medication you must take on a regular basis
- A checkbook
- An extra credit card
- Overnight items and a change of clothes

## Copies of Personal Records

- Social Security cards
- Birth certificates for family members
- Marriage certificate (if married)
- Passport, work visa, other immigration documents
- School records
- Baptism records
- Medical records, including immunizations and prescriptions

## Copies of Financial Records

- Checking and savings account and other investment information for all accounts
- Pension, IRA, 401(k) or other retirement plan statements
- Credit card information including a listing of all accounts and numbers
- Most recent credit report
- Loan/mortgage information
- Bankruptcy discharge statement (if applicable)
- Tax returns for the past two years
- Insurance policy numbers and companies
- Will

## Copies of Documentation of Property Ownership

- Car title
- House deed or rental agreement
- Special photos or heirlooms
- Photos of any other valuable items you may own

You may want to store your items for personal "survival" in a separate place from your documents. At family or friends may be the best place to leave a change of clothes, medications, and the other things you may need if you are unable to stay in your home.

One of the best places to store your documents is in a safe deposit box in a bank. You can rent a safe deposit box for a relatively small amount of money, and your important papers and other valuable items will be protected at all times. If you have your own storage space at your workplace, that may also be a good place to store your safe box.

The better preparation you have made to be away from your home, the less vulnerable and desperate you will feel if you have to leave because of a disaster. Having the things you need to continue your life when you are away from your home will also give you more options for dealing with your situation in a positive way.

# ***Families Need Disaster Plans***

By: Judy Berryhill, Area Specialist - Adolescent Development

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services--water, gas, electricity or telephones--were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.



Families can cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

## **1. Find Out What Could Happen to You**

- C Contact your local Red Cross chapter or emergency management office before a disaster occurs--be prepared to take notes.
- C Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- C Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- C Ask about animal care after a disaster. Animals are not allowed inside emergency shelters because of health regulations.
- C Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- C Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or day care center, and other places where your family spends time.

## **2. Create a Disaster Plan**

- C Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather, and earthquakes to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.
- C Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- C Pick two places to meet:
  1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
  2. Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. **Everyone must know the address and phone number.**
- C Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number. **(THIS PLAN IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR FAMILY MEMBERS WHO MAY BE AWAY FROM HOME AND/OR USE CELL PHONES.)**
- C Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.

## **3. Practice and update your plan every six months.**

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency and American Red Cross

# ***Teaching Children How to Use 911***

By: Denise J. Brandon, Ph.D., Parenting and Family Relations Specialist

The telephone number 911 has made it easier to teach children what to do in an emergency. Still, just knowing the phone number is not enough. Parents and care givers can help children learn when and how to use 911.

Children must be taught what is an emergency. They need to know that a fire, an intruder, or an unconscious family member is an emergency. A scraped kneed, lost bicycle, or cat up the tree is not an emergency. Teach them where to get help for problems that are not emergencies. In the case of fire, they need to know to leave the house before they call 911.

Children need to know their address and phone number. Though they must learn not to share that information with strangers, they must give that information to someone when they call 911. Help them practice making the call with a toy telephone. Pretend to be the 911 dispatcher. Ask the following questions or others depending on the emergency you are pretending to have:



- Where are you calling from? (Where do you live?)
- What type of emergency is this? (What is the problem?)
- Who needs help?
- Is the person awake and breathing?

Be sure to tell children that they should stay on the line until the person on the other end tells them to hang up the phone. If they hang up too fast, the 911 dispatcher may not get all the information he or she needs.

Here are some other tips:

- Always say “nine-one-one” not “nine-eleven.” A child might look for the 11 button on the phone in an emergency.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street.
- If you live in an apartment, make sure your child knows the apartment number and floor.
- When you are away from home, leave a number where you can be reached such as your cell phone or pager. Include the number of another trusted adult who can be called if you can’t be reached.
- Provide babysitters with a list of any known allergies your child might have, medical conditions, and insurance information.
- If someone in your home has a special condition such as diabetes or heart disease that might lead to an emergency, prepare your child by telling what might happen and what to do.
- Keep a basic first-aid kit handy and teach your child how to use it when he or she is old enough.

Taken from: *Teaching Your Child How to Use 911* at KidsHealth - <http://kidshealth.org/> - click on Parents then first aid and safety to find the article.

# Be Prepared: Keep Your Medicines Close at Hand

By: Bobbi Clarke, PhD, RD, Professor and Extension Health Specialist

It is very easy to forget to take your medicines during an emergency. With increased number of building evacuations and airplane disruptions, there are some steps you can take to make sure your medicines are available so you can take every dose when it needs to be taken.



Here are some tips to help you keep your medicines close at hand:

- **Don't take all your medicines to work with you.** Take enough for one week and leave the rest at home.
- **Don't leave all of your medicines at home.** Even though you may always take them at home, it might be wise to carry a few doses with you just in case you are delayed in traffic. Many people who lived near the World Trade Center were unable to return home for several days and missed several doses of their medicines. With some medicines such as those used for heart conditions, blood pressure, seizures, and to help prevent blood clots, missing just a few doses can be very serious and even life-threatening.
- **Always carry your medicines with you on an airplane.** Pack your medicines in your carry-on luggage or purse rather than in your check-in luggage.
- **If your prescriptions are filled by a mail order pharmacy and delayed because of airplane service, call your local pharmacy.** The mail order pharmacies recommend that until the airplane traffic is stabilized, you should have a back-up. Go to a pharmacy near your home and speak directly with the pharmacist. Ask the pharmacist what you should do in event that your mail order prescriptions are delayed. You can check the mail order pharmacy web site or call their 1-800 number.
- **Have a plan for getting your medicines refilled.** If you are ever in the situation where you are all out of your medicine and need a refill, call your doctor for a new prescription. Ask that it be called in to your pharmacy or call your pharmacy to call it in to the doctor. It is important to have a pharmacist who can help you in an emergency.

#####

For Additional Information Contact  
Your County Extension Office

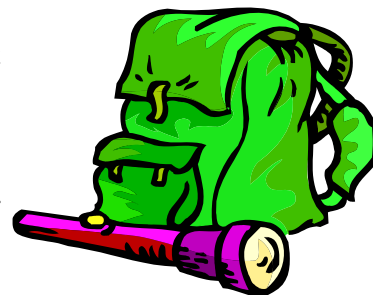
# Food and Water for Emergency

by Judy Berryhill, Area Specialist - Adolescent Development

*In a disaster, you might be cut off from food, water and electricity for days. By preparing emergency provisions, you can turn what could be a life-threatening situation into a manageable problem.*

It's 2:00 AM and a flash flood forces you to evacuate your home — fast!! There is no time to gather food from the kitchen, fill bottles of water, grab a first-aid kit from the closet and snatch a flashlight and a portable radio from the kitchen. You need to have these items packed and ready in one place **before** disaster strikes.

Pack at least a **three-day supply** for food and water for each member of your family, and store it in a handy place. Choose foods that are easy to carry, nutritious and ready-to-eat. In addition, pack these emergency items:



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>T</b> Medical supplies and first aid manual            | <b>T</b> Money and matches in a waterproof container |
| <b>T</b> Hygiene supplies                                 | <b>T</b> Fire Extinguisher                           |
| <b>T</b> Portable radio, flashlights and extra batteries  | <b>T</b> Blanket and extra clothing                  |
| <b>T</b> Shovel and other useful tools                    | <b>T</b> Infant and small children's needs           |
| <b>T</b> Household liquid bleach to purify drinking water | <b>T</b> Manual can opener                           |

## How To Purify Water

**Boiling** is the safest method of purifying water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes.

**Disinfection.** You can use household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular liquid bleach that contains 5.25 sodium hypochlorite. DO NOT use scented bleaches, color-safe or bleaches with added cleaners.

Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water, stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.

DO NOT use iodine or water treatment products sold in camping or surplus stores. These products do not contain 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite as the only active ingredient.

**Distillation** will purify water. . .and this involves boiling water and then collecting the vapor that condenses back to water.