

Disaster Planning for Families with Special Healthcare Needs

Planning outline:

- Create a list of items to purchase and to gather from your home for supply kits
- Check insurance coverage
- Prepare property
- Create family emergency plan
- Review evacuation routes (know your zone)
- Examine recovery options and create plan

Things to think about:

- ☐ It's important to prepare in advance as supplies will be limited closer to an event.
- ☐ Some items require ordering or online purchasing, so prepare accordingly.
- ☐ Determine who will be with you during a crisis in order to purchase supplies and pack appropriately.
- ☐ Think about their immediate and long term needs in case of dire circumstances (such as house destroyed, car destroyed, flooding, etc)
- ☐ Plan as if you will need important supplies for longer than expected (medical supplies, medicines, batteries for equipment)

Creating a Disaster Supply Kit:

It's important to think in terms of two scenarios: staying and leaving. In other words, you want to create a supply list to be used if you are staying put in your location, and one if you will need to evacuate.

Here are the categories to plan:

- Food, Water - Check expiration dates (water in plastic jugs expires). Pack non-perishables, cans with flip tops
- First aid kit / Emergency supplies
- Important Documents
- Clothing, Toiletries
- Special Conditions and Needs - medical and emotional
- Special Items for special situations - baby, pets
- Entertainment- remember to pack items to keep everyone busy that don't require electricity or batteries (coloring books/crayons, cards, puzzles, frisbees)

Things to think about:

- ☐ Different ages of members within your household
- ☐ Dietary needs (kosher, celiac, dairy free, nut free)
- ☐ Medical needs including prescriptions and equipment
- ☐ Devices and equipment
- ☐ Religious considerations
- ☐ Pets or service animals

Special Needs Registry

The Special Needs Registry helps to identify people who may require additional support during an emergency due to physical, mental, cognitive, or sensory disabilities. Individuals typically register in advance with their state Dept. of Health, providing details about their needs and preferred communication methods. This allows emergency responders to better understand and cater to the specific needs of registered individuals during evacuations or shelter operations. Registration should be done early.

<https://snr.flhealthresponse.com/>

Vulnerable Population Registry

Some local municipalities use The Vulnerable Population Registry as a tool to help evaluate resident needs in their communities and assist in planning a response in an emergency. You should pre-register in the Vulnerable Population Registry in your area if you are at risk due to a disability, frailty or a health issue, regardless of age, AND you elect to stay at home in the event of a hurricane or other emergency because evacuation is not an option. Registration should be in advance, and before a storm threatens.

Special Needs Shelter

A Special Needs Shelter is for people who have special needs according to the definition in your state's Administrative Code (example: in Florida: "someone who during periods of evacuation or emergency, requires sheltering assistance, due to physical impairment, mental impairment, cognitive impairment or sensory disabilities"). The basic eligibility criteria you would need to meet to stay in a special needs shelter:

- You are a person with special medical needs
- Your care exceeds the basic first aid provided at general population shelters
- Your impairments or disabilities are medically stable and do not exceed the capacity, staffing and equipment of the special needs shelter to minimize deterioration of your pre-event level of health.

*Palm Beach County Shelter Info

<https://discover.pbc.gov/publicsafety/dem/Pages/Shelters.aspx>

FND Disaster booklets

<https://fndusa.org/knowledgebase/hurricane-season-disaster-readiness-for-people-with-disabilities/>

Palm Beach County Emergency Management website

<https://discover.pbc.gov/publicsafety/dem/Pages/default.aspx>

Palm Beach County Hurricane Guide

<https://discover.pbc.gov/publicsafety/PDF/Hurricane-Guide.pdf>