

What to do in an emergency



The Basics

- ✓ Always wear your diabetes **medical ID**.
- ✓ **Stay calm** so that stress doesn't increase your blood sugar.
- ✓ **Monitor your blood sugar** often and record it in your log.
- ✓ If you're ill, remember to **follow the sick day rules** (see the handout on sick days).



Medications, Food, and Water

- ✓ **Continue to take your medicines.** Be sure to store them as directed on the package
- ✓ **Stick with your schedule and meal plan** as best as you can. Not eating on time can affect your blood sugar.
- ✓ **Drink plenty of water.**
- ✓ Always keep a **fast source of sugar with you** in case your blood sugar is too low.
- ✓ **Watch out for contaminated food or water.** Don't eat food you think may be spoiled. You may need to boil water for 10 minutes before drinking or using it.



Staying Healthy

- ✓ **Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes** that fit well.
- ✓ **Check your feet daily and never go barefoot.** Debris from a disaster can injure your feet. Heat, cold, moisture, and not being able to change your shoes can lead to infection, especially if your blood sugar is high.
- ✓ **Try not to do too much physical activity,** especially if you're doing things like repairing damage from the disaster or helping others. Working too hard can lower your blood sugar. And if your blood sugar is over 250 mg/dL, too much physical activity can cause it to go even higher. If you have to do a lot of physical activity, try to eat and drink more.

Handling Insulin

- Keep insulin away from too much light, heat or cold. Do not freeze.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for storing insulin (bottle or pen). Some types of insulin may be stored at room temperature after opening while others should be refrigerated.
- If insulin clumps or sticks to the sides of the bottle, don't use it.
- Although you generally shouldn't reuse your insulin syringes, do that if it's your only option. **But don't share your syringes with other people.**



Safety Tips for Hot Weather

- ✓ Stay indoors, in an air-conditioned or fan-cooled place if possible.
- ✓ Avoid exercising outside.
- ✓ Wear light-colored cotton clothing.
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids.
- ✓ Avoid salt tablets unless prescribed by your doctor.
- ✓ Seek emergency treatment if you feel fatigue, weakness, abdominal cramps, fever, or confusion, or if you're not urinating enough.

If You Need Help

If you're seriously ill or you're out of medications or food, and you can't reach your health care provider, then call 911 or go to the nearest hospital or emergency medical center right away. If you can't do that, contact the police or the American Red Cross.

