



Office of Children and Youth with Specific Health Care Needs

Emergency Preparedness for Children with Specific Health Care Needs

Planning for an emergency takes extra work when you have a child with specific health care needs. By breaking your plan down into easy steps, you can keep your child safe and healthy even if the power goes out or normal services stop. Keep reading to learn how you can be better prepared.

1. Think About Your Situation

Imagine a big storm or emergency. How would you care for your child if:

- Help takes a long time to arrive
- Family members get separated
- There is no water, electricity, phone service, heat, air conditioning, or refrigeration
- You cannot get refills on medicine or medical supplies
- You have to leave your home quickly, stay in a shelter, or shelter in place
- You do not have a car or way to travel

2. Make an Emergency Plan

Talk to your family

- Sit down with your family and talk about what you will do during different kinds of emergencies
- Think about what family members need to quickly exit your home. Make sure you think about how you will help family members with limited mobility
- Practice your escape routes
- Talk about how you will connect with each other if cell phones stop working
- Get a medical alert or ID bracelet for your child

Talk to your Care Team

- Ask your child's doctor(s) how to reach them during a disaster
- Find emergency phone numbers for important treatments your child might need like dialysis or other life-sustaining treatments
- If you cannot reach your doctor during a disaster, you can get help from emergency workers or Red Cross shelters



Work with your community

- Find out the emergency and lockdown plans at your child's school
- Learn how the school will give your child their medications during a disaster
- Keep extra medicine and equipment at your child's school
- Update all doctor's orders each school year
- Call your local police and fire stations. Ask if they keep a list of people who need special help during an emergency
- Contact BGE about their Special Needs Programs
- Write down which local radio station gives updates during an emergency

Write down your plan

- Put all phone numbers, meetup spots, and steps on paper
- Share this plan with your family, neighbors and friends
- Save a copy on your phone or online (Google drive/phone app) and keep a paper copy in a waterproof bag
- Review and update your plan once a year

3. Create a Support Network

- Your network of trusted family, neighbors and friends is your first source of help during an emergency
- Teach them about your child's needs and show them how to use special equipment like wheelchairs
- Give a trusted person a house key
- Connect with other families who have children with similar health needs to share tips

4. Pack a Disaster Supply Kit

Pack a main emergency kit, then make smaller kits for your car, work, or school. Your kit should include:

Medical Information and Medications

- Put your emergency plan and your child's care plan in a waterproof bag
- Pack at least a 3-day supply of all medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist how to store them safely
- Pack a two-week supply of medical items like syringes, bandages, feeding tube supplies, or catheters

Power and Specialized Equipment

- If you use a generator for backup power, never use it indoors because the fumes are deadly
- Ask an expert how much gas you should store for the generator and how long you can store it

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- Keep car charger and power banks ready for phones and small equipment.
 - Keep battery powered or manual versions of essential medical equipment ready, such as a manual wheelchair

Food, Water, and Comfort

- Pack special foods, formula and supplies
- Store plenty of drinking water
- Pack favorite toys or games that calm or entertain your child
- Pack paperwork that proves your service animal is allowed to go into a shelter with you
- Pack extra glasses, contact lens supplies, and batteries for hearing aids or communication devices

Extra Tips

- Refresh your supplies once a year
- Replace stored water every six months
- Update medical forms yearly
- Keep your kit in waterproof, bugproof containers that are easy to reach
- Store batteries outside of flashlights and devices until they are needed



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Additional Resources

Maryland Resources

- **Maryland Department of Disabilities: Emergency Preparedness**
<https://mdod.maryland.gov/ep/pages/emergency-prep-home.aspx>
- **Maryland Department of Emergency Management**
<https://mdem.maryland.gov/pages/home-12345.aspx>
- **Maryland Office of Preparedness and Response**
<https://health.maryland.gov/preparedness/pages/home.aspx>

General Resources

- **American Red Cross**
<http://www.redcross.org/>
- **American Red Cross: Disaster Safety for People with Disabilities**
<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/inclusive-preparedness-resources>
- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
<https://www.cdc.gov/>
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**
<https://www.fema.gov/>
- **Ready (Department of Homeland Security)**
<https://www.ready.gov/>
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**
Disaster Distress Helpline
A national hotline dedicated to providing year-round disaster crisis counseling. Toll-free, multilingual, crisis support service, available 24/7 to all residents in the U.S. and its territories who are experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.
Call or text 1-800-985-5990