



Drug Safety & Natural Disasters



Before a Natural Disaster:

Taking precautions for storing medications and supplies is key to being prepared. Individuals should:

Keep an up-to-date list of their medications, including dose and indicated use

Know how much medication they have on hand

Obtain early refills if they anticipate access to their pharmacies will be disrupted

Place medication bottles or packages in water-tight containers (such as plastic containers with lids) if there is a possibility of flooding or other water damage

Have ice available for medications that need refrigeration

After a Natural Disaster:

Drugs Exposed to Excessive Heat

The effectiveness of drugs can be destroyed by high temperatures. Consider replacing them.

Drugs Exposed to Unsafe Water

Drugs exposed to flood or unsafe municipal water may become contaminated. Drugs should be discarded if they came into contact with flood or contaminated water.

Lifesaving Drugs Exposed to Heat or Unsafe Water

When a replacement is not readily available, if the drug looks unchanged (i.e. pills in a wet container appear dry), the drugs can be used until a replacement is available. If the pills are wet, then they are contaminated and need to be discarded.

Drugs That Need to Be Reconstituted (Made Into a Liquid)

Drugs that have to be reconstituted should be mixed only with purified water.

Drugs That Need Refrigeration

If the drug is necessary to sustain life, it may be used until a new supply is available.

Because temperature-sensitive drugs lose potency if not refrigerated, they should be replaced with a new supply as soon as possible.

