

5 Steps to Ready

How to stock up and stay safe during National Preparedness Month

Prepare for emergencies now, when there is time. During a disaster, you might have only minutes to make decisions. Act now so you and your family can stay safe.

1. Make a plan

- Identify meet-up locations and people you will need to contact.
- Put the list of contacts in your wallet, on your phone and somewhere visible in your house.

2. Build a kit

- Store enough food and water for at least three days. Be sure to include the needs of pets and those with special diets.
- Consider buying a pre-made kit if it will meet your needs.

3. Keep at least seven days of medication on hand

- Work with your pharmacist and insurance company to secure the extra doses.

4. Make copies of important documents

- You'll need your health insurance and prescription information.
- Keep these on your phone, in the cloud or on a USB memory stick.

5. Stay informed

- Learn about local hazards unique to your local geography.
- Take courses such as CPR and First Aid.
- Sign up for your county, city or local police alert system. An early warning can give you the minutes you need to prepare for a fast-moving disaster.
- Learn more at **ready.gov**

Tips for putting your plan into action

Disasters can change everything.

Communication could be difficult

- Texting is the best form of communication. When phone networks are overwhelmed, texts will send slowly but are more likely to get through.
- If you have school-age children, know the school's response plan, including where they will evacuate and how they will communicate with caregivers.
- Identify a contact out of state to communicate through; often messages out of state will travel faster than local ones.

You may need to shelter in place or leave your home

- Locate and mark the gas, water and power shut-offs to your house. Tape a wrench in a bag to the gas shutoff for easy access in an emergency.
- When making a kit, pack non-perishable food your family will actually enjoy, and don't forget a can opener. Have an annual 'disaster dinner' to keep the emergency food fresh and restock as needed.
- Make your kit portable, so you can move easily if you need to. A small kit might fit in a backpack; for a larger kit, you might need a container with wheels.
- Store the batteries of electronics (such as phones and radios) separate from the devices to prevent them from being drained in storage.
- Know evacuation routes. Understand local hazards such as flood zones.
- Keep paper maps in your kit, as neighborhoods look very different when they have been damaged, and landmarks you rely on may be gone.

Disasters can happen anywhere

- Look up potential hazards when going on vacation and be aware of how to respond to unfamiliar environments.

Americares is a health-focused relief and development organization that saves lives and improves health for people affected by poverty or disaster. Each year, Americares reaches an average of 90 countries, including the United States, with life-changing health programs, medicine, medical supplies and emergency aid. Americares is the world's leading nonprofit provider of donated medicine and medical supplies. For more information, visit [americares.org](https://www.americares.org).