



Summary

Hurricanes are powerful storms that form at sea and consist of strong wind and rain. Because modern technology allows us to track a hurricane's progress, communities in the hurricane path will usually be warned of the storm's strength. Evacuating the area may be necessary because of the strength of a particular storm. By taking some basic precautions, you will be prepared and able to help prevent many injuries, as well as the possibility of some diseases.

Before the hurricane, learn about the emergency procedures established by your community, and prepare a personal family action plan. Keep emergency supplies on hand such as extra food, water, and battery-operated radios and flashlights. If authorities issue an evacuation order, follow the route they suggest.

After the storm, listen for public announcements regarding the safety of your neighborhood and return only when the area is considered safe. Avoid downed powerlines and report any problems with your utilities to the appropriate companies. Be aware of possible structural, electrical, or gas-leak hazards.

If drinking water has been contaminated, treat the water before use. Discard any food that has come into contact with contaminated water. Remember the rule of thumb for food -- "when in doubt, throw it out."

The weeks after a hurricane will be physically and emotionally draining. To help manage stress, take frequent breaks during the cleanup, and get as much rest as possible. While some sleeplessness, anxiety, anger, hyperactivity, mild depression, or lethargy are normal, extreme or prolonged symptoms should be evaluated by a mental health professional.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).

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