

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER

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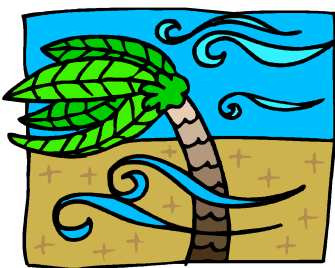
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June 2007

Food for the Storm Season

Mary Keith, PhD, LD/N, Foods, Nutrition and Health Educator

Whether we like it or not, the bad weather season is here again. Hopefully we won't have many problems. But since we can not assume the hurricanes will pass us by, we have to act responsibly and prepare. As soon as a storm is announced the first thing many people



think of is water. That's great, but there's a lot more to consider. We are advised to have enough food for every

member of the household for three days. The checklist on the next page shows how many servings of each food group we should have.

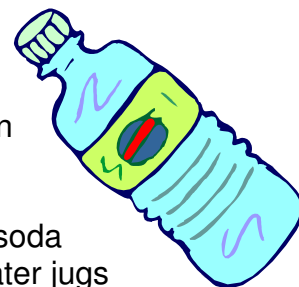
Having enough is important, having it in the right shape or size is also important. These are some points to consider:

STORING WATER

Plan on at least **1 gallon per person per day** of drinking water. This includes what you will drink and what you will use for cooking or washing dishes

and brushing teeth.

Water can be safely stored in reusable plastic containers if they seal tightly. Water jugs that have screw-on lids, rather than the snap-on kinds are better if you plan on filling jugs at home. Two liter soda bottles could be used, and water jugs made for camping or travel are also fine. Milk jugs are not the best. It's hard to completely remove the milk protein and fat. These can allow the growth of bacteria.



Beside water for drinking, if possible store water for washing and for flushing toilets. You can scrub out the bathtub and fill it with water for non-drinking uses. Large garbage cans could be filled with water if you have a garage or other indoor area to store it.

FLAVOR THE WATER

Get instant powdered drink mixes to add flavor to bottled water or cover the taste of stale or treated water. Products with added vitamins and less sugar add better balance to your diet. Children and seniors who do not exercise or sweat

heavily do not need salty electrolyte drinks.

Canned or powdered milk are another way of flavoring water and maintaining adequate fluid intake. Chocolate or strawberry flavoring can add flavor, make the milk more acceptable to children and possibly help soothe them in an anxious situation. Powdered milk can also be added to instant pudding mixes for a nutritious dessert or snack as well.

If you will have a way of heating water, dry soup mixes or instant noodle dishes is another good option. You won't have a microwave if the power is out, so include some light-weight metal pans and spoons in your hurricane kit.

CHOOSING FOODS

Use the chart on the next page to check off how much food you need. If you have enough to fill each box in the chart you will have a healthy balance of foods enough for 2 adults and 2 children for 3 days. Try to get a variety of foods in each group. While several loaves of bread may be convenient, having some granola bars, crackers or rice cakes too might make your family feel better.

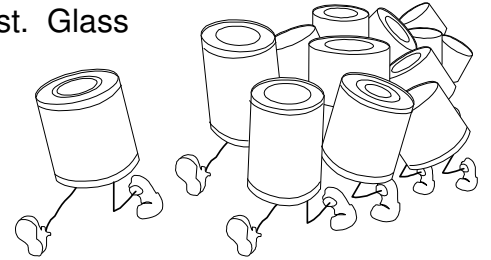


SMALL SIZES

Get containers of a size that you can eat at one meal. Remember, you will not be able to store leftovers safely without electricity. If you have a family of four, then a can with 4 servings will be good. Or if you know that something is a favorite food and everyone will be willing to eat extra, then a larger size can with 6 or 8 servings might be better for your family.

CANS ARE SAFER

Metal cans or solid, heavy-duty plastic containers will resist water, wind and insects best. Glass jars are heavy, break easily, are hard to pack if you decide to evacuate, and might not be safe if they sit in flood waters. Foods packaged in paper, cardboard, or light-weight plastic must be stored in large cans (think Christmas popcorn tins) or double-bagged in heavy duty zipper-seal plastic bags.



OTHER ESSENTIALS

Pack a manual can opener. Have enough paper goods: plates, napkins, towels, cups, bowls that you won't have to wash dishes. Several bottles of hand sanitizer, and bleach or other disinfectant will help keep you all safer.

Unless the Health Department advises other amounts, the standard recommendation is that **half a teaspoon of bleach in a gallon of clear water** will disinfect dishes, tables and cans. If the water is dirty or cloudy then add bleach, stir and smell.



Keep adding bleach until you can smell the chlorine.

EXTRA TREATS

Don't stock up on lots of salty snacks like chips or even jerky. Extra salt will increase thirst. Do plan on a few extra treats a day. Granola bars, keeping meals healthy and basic is important, you'll need energy for extra work.

Take care and think sunshine!!

Infant Concerns During Disasters

Jessica Brennan, Extension Agent
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

People living in Florida during hurricane season need to be as prepared as possible to live without the household comforts that we all take for granted. To complicate matters, when you have infants there are some special needs that you need to think about. Here are some things to think about when you have to care for an infant during a disaster.



You will have the easiest time feeding your baby if you are breastfeeding. Breastfeeding requires no money, preparation or equipment. It can also be soothing for you and the baby while providing more antibodies to your child. This is especially important during a disaster when the environment may not be very clean. There is one challenge that you might face during this time. The stress during a hurricane is high and it can affect your milk supply. Try to keep yourself as calm as possible during feeding to keep the milk available for your child.



If you cannot breastfeed, there are several options for safe bottle feeding. The first is to use prepared, canned, single servings of baby formula. Using this formula, you do not need to add water, which could be contaminated. Also, because it is prepared as a single serving, there should not be leftovers that you have to refrigerate to keep safe. The second option in bottle feeding is to use concentrated or powdered formula. You should use bottled water to mix it. Do not use tap water, since it might be contaminated. Also make sure to pack plenty of bottles and nipples.

Canned baby food is also a good option. If the can has not been opened, then it can be stored unrefrigerated. However, any leftover food that your baby does not eat must be thrown away. Remember to store baby spoons, as well.



You need to be cautious of flood water and what it touches. There is no way to know what flood water has come in contact with. It can carry bacteria and cause disease. You must throw away any baby food, nipples, bottles and pacifiers that come in contact with flood waters. This includes baby food with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops, crimped caps and milk or formula in cardboard containers. Also, try to keep your child from touching the flood water, if possible.

Set aside enough diapers and wipes for three to four days. The March of Dimes recommends about 10 diapers per day. Several changes of soft, comfortable clothing should be packed for the baby, as well as a blanket to comfort your child in different temperatures. Also, do not forget any medication that they may need over a couple of days.

Finally, there are some documents that you will want to store with you in an air tight plastic bag. These include your child's birth certificate, medical and immunization records and contact information for your health care provider.

Planning ahead will ensure an environment that is as safe as possible for you and your child during any emergency situation.

Is Your Home Ready for Hurricane Season?

Compiled by Lisa Leslie, Hillsborough County Extension Agent

Hurricane season begins June 1. Now is the time to inspect your home and reinforce weak areas that can compromise your home in a storm.

Critical Areas to Protect

Three key areas to secure are garage doors, windows and your roof. These areas have the highest potential for being effected by the wind or wind driven debris.

Garage Doors

Garage doors are particularly vulnerable to high winds because many are made of relatively lightweight material and cover a long span of opening.



Garage doors installed to meet the requirements of the 2002 Florida building code are designed to meet current wind

resistance standards. Garage doors installed prior to that date will need to be reinforced or replaced.

Windows

There are many options for reinforcing windows - plywood, shutters, impact resistance windows, and newer products such as fabric or screen shields. Factors such as cost, ease of installation, and degree of protection are important considerations. No matter what type of shutter you choose, proper installation is important. Shutters should be attached to your home's structural framing (NOT window or door frames). If you are using plywood be sure that you are using the proper fasteners and the fasteners are made of corrosion resistant material.

Window film does NOT offer the same type of protection as impact resistant window systems or properly installed shutters. In the event of impact, window film may keep the glass together. But it is not designed to prevent a breach to the complete window unit. **Window film does not qualify under the Florida Building Code as approved hurricane protection for single-family dwelling units.**

Roof Systems

Loss of the roof covering, such as shingles, tiles or metal panels make the house more vulnerable to water damage. So now is a good time to check your roof for loose shingles.

Two common types of roof systems in Florida are hip roofs and gable roofs.

Hip roofs are more resistant to high wind loads. Gable roofs can be reinforced with braces or trusses. Consider hiring a licensed, professional roofing contractor to make roof reinforcements.



Hiring a Contractor

Choose carefully when hiring a contractor. Contractor licensing reports are available through the Hillsborough County Planning & Growth website, <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/pgm/resources/onlineservices/contractors/home.cfm>.

Sources: University of Florida/IFAS Wind Mitigation Series by Hal Knowles, Kathleen Ruppert, Karla Lenfesty, and Barbara Haldeman

Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, www.flash.org

Helping Children to Cope During a Hurricane

Diana Converse, Family Life Faculty

A hurricane is a frightening experience for everyone, but for a young child it can be extremely threatening. A child does not have the ability to cope with the situation that an adult has. An extra amount of understanding and patience is usually necessary.

Making plans for the family

Families that work together to prepare for a hurricane will cope better than those who do not take precautions. Consider how your children might react in a disaster, what your own reactions might be, and how the crisis could affect each person's emotional and physical well-being.

Prepare for, and carry out emergency plans, involving children in sharing whatever action is needed. All children need and want to have important roles. This helps them feel a part of the family and prepares them to cope with future situations. For example, your child may be helpful in going through the hurricane supplies check list with you and writing a shopping list for the family.

Follow the suggestions or public warnings by emergency services for the care and safety of your child. Awareness of possible problems and quick action may prevent injuries and other difficulties. Plan in advance how to deal with a hurricane as a family, such as having a designated friend or relative in another state that your family can call to 'check-in' with if necessary.

Talk to children simply and matter-of-factly about the hurricane and how it is to be handled. Give them clear instructions. This helps children understand the situation and reduce their fear of the unknown. Check news stories and talk about how your family will handle the situation. Playing "Let's pretend . . ." games with young children may be useful in helping them to work out "what if" situations. Most children are not capable of



understanding the magnitude and severity of the situation. Be understanding and patient.

If your family will evacuate, have each child pack a small bag or box of supplies for meeting a variety of possible situations. In addition to diapers, food and drink, include a few games, books and hobby materials for sitting out emergencies. Be sure to take something familiar such as a favorite toy or stuffed animal to help children feel more secure.



Coping with emotions

Once families are out of physical danger, they may be surprised that children are still afraid. Research indicates that children's fears vary according to age, maturation, and previous learning experiences. Four major fears common in children are: death, darkness, animals, and abandonment. In the experience of a hurricane, children would have encountered three out of the four major fears. Undoubtedly, this will have an impact on their ability to cope for quite some time. It is especially important for parents to continue to provide emotional support for their children even after the storm is over.

Remember that children mirror their parents' anxieties. Being calm will help to reduce your children's fears. Reassure children that you are there for them and will look after them. You may need to repeat information and comfort them many times.

Another important aspect about children's fears indicated in current research is that fears may be intensified when adults back away from discussing the topic with children. Many families ban all painful topics from family conversation, yet, one of the most important steps adults can take is to share the time to talk with children.

Listen to what children tell you about their fears and what they think have happened. Encourage them to talk and ask questions. Answer each question as honestly and truthfully as you can.

Spend a little extra time with children before bedtime. If a child comes out during the night, reassure him or her that you are there. Leave a door open and a nightlight on.



Touching is important for children during this period. Close contact helps assure children that you are there for them and will not abandon them. Hold your child. Provide comfort.

If your child lost a meaningful toy or blanket, allow the child to mourn and grieve (by crying, perhaps). It is all part of helping the young child deal with feelings about the disaster. In time, it may be helpful to replace the lost object.

In a crisis situation a child may show unusually “childish” behavior, such as bed wetting, thumb sucking and clinging to parents. These are signs of anxiety and are usually temporary. Try not to focus on these behaviors and don’t punish children who act this way.

If you must leave your child

Children who have been through a disaster are afraid of being separated from family and left alone. If at all possible, avoid any separations with your child, even to go to the store or the damaged area. If you must leave children with friends or relatives, follow the steps below to reassure them:

- Let your child know how long you will be away.
- Let your child know how often you will be in touch with him or her.
- Keep in touch with your child frequently and as regularly as you promised. This will reduce the chances of upset while you are away.

- Keep track of your child to be sure he or she is provided for. You know your child’s needs better than anyone else.

Stay tuned in to your child

Some children may need additional help in coping with a hurricane. Their behaviors may indicate additional problems.

Following a disaster some children may:

- Be upset at the loss of a favorite toy, blanket, or pet
- Be angry. They might hit, throw, kick to show their anger
- Become more active and restless
- Be afraid of the hurricane recurring
- Want to sleep with a parent or other person
- Have nightmares
- Have symptoms of illness such as nausea, vomiting, headaches, lack of appetite
- Be quiet and withdrawn
- Become upset easily-crying and whining frequently
- Feel guilty that they caused the disaster because of some previous behavior
- Feel neglected by parents who are busying trying to clean up and rebuild
- Refuse to go to school or to child care
- Become afraid of loud noises, rain, storms
- Not show any outward signs of being upset



Source: Helping your child cope with disaster, Clemson University Extension Document, September 1989

For more information:

Parenting After a Natural Disaster
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FM001>

Active Listening: A Communication Tool
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HE361>

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