

How the Elderly Can Prepare for Storms

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – When a hurricane comes along, elderly people can be especially vulnerable. They are more likely to have diminished awareness, health problems, access and functional needs and various other limitations.

Puerto Rico is home to more than 640,000 residents 65 and older, and nearly half of them live with a physical disability or functional need. They often need help from family and neighbors to prepare for a storm.

Whenever possible, seniors should find shelter with family or a caregiver.

Older folks in a nursing home or adult-living facility should speak with the administrator about the specific hurricane/evacuation plan for that facility.

Preparedness Kit for the Elderly

- One gallon of water per day. Electrolyte beverages are a good source of hydration.
- Foods ready to eat and not perishable, preferably rich in B12 vitamin and low in sodium. Vitamin supplements can help prevent nutritional deficiencies.
- Blankets, extra clothing and comfortable shoes.
- Spare eyeglasses, catheters, batteries, oxygen systems, etc.
- First-aid kit, medical insurance and Medicaid/Medicare cards.
- Prescription medicines and copies of prescriptions that can be refilled for up to six months.
- Medical-alert tags or bracelets with information about healthcare needs.
- An emergency-contact list to reach family and friends.
- Plenty of extra cash, since access to banks and ATMs may be limited.
- Copies of family records and other important documents such as birth and marriage certificates, Social Security cards, passports, wills, deeds, and financial, insurance and immunizations records — all stashed in a sealed, waterproof bag.
- A battery-powered radio and/or a NOAA weather radio.
- A solar or battery-operated flashlight.



- A whistle to call for help and a small mirror to reflect sunlight in case you have to signal rescue teams.

Tips for Staying at a Shelter

- Take what you can carry from your readiness kit.
- Notify management of any needs you may have.
- Let your family and out-of-town contacts know where you are sheltering or where you will be staying during the storm.
- Make arrangements for your pets' care.

Older people should have a network of relatives and neighbors who can help them be prepared for an emergency.

For more information on hurricane season preparedness, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4339/hurricane-preparedness.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, all FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362) 711/VRS - Video Relay Service). Multilingual operators are available. (Press 2 for Spanish). TTY call 800-462-7585.

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Page 2 of 2