



DURING A HURRICANE PATIENTS MUST PREPARE FOR THE WORST BECAUSE....

- Pharmacies will begin closing 24 hours prior to landfall.
- There will be wide-spread loss of power throughout the county for up to two weeks or longer.
- Most dialysis centers do not have generator backup power.
- Many physician offices could be closed as a result of damage or lack of power.
- Medical supply vendors will stop delivering oxygen cylinders prior to threatening weather.
- Ambulance services will stop responding once conditions outside become threatening (45 mph winds).



For an electronic copy of this brochure in Spanish or Creole please contact the Medical Society at (561) 433-3940 or visit www.pbcms.org/herc

Palm Beach County
Medical Society Services
3540 Forest Hill Blvd., Suite 101
West Palm Beach, FL 33406



Hurricane Preparedness for Patients



Are you prepared to address your health and medical needs in the event a hurricane strikes Palm Beach County this year?

Hurricane season is June 1st through November 30th. In preparation for the season, the Palm Beach County Medical Reserve Corps and Palm Beach County Medical Society Services encourages all patients to develop a health and medical hurricane preparedness plan. This brochure is designed to provide general information to help patients in their planning process. Consult with your physician and your medical supply vendors to make sure you are appropriately prepared in the event a hurricane strikes Palm Beach County.



SPEAK TO YOUR PHYSICIAN

Prior to hurricane season is the time to speak with your physician regarding your health and medical hurricane plan. Some medical conditions require special provisions to avoid complications that can be brought on by the destruction of a hurricane. Examples include:

- Oxygen dependent patients – backup electrical power for concentrators or backup oxygen cylinders will be needed. Also ask your vendor what their plan is to replenish your oxygen supply after the storm.
- Insulin dependent patients – backup electrical power to keep insulin refrigerated will be needed.
- Pregnant women – high risk or 36 weeks or beyond should consult with their physician regarding whether or not to shelter at a hospital.
- Bedridden or immobile patients – should make sure that their caregiver will be with them during the storm.
- Medication dependent patients – must maintain at least a two week supply of critical medication in the event retail pharmacies or physician offices are closed for an extended period.
- Dialysis patients – will need to receive dialysis just prior to the storm and pre-schedule an appointment for post-storm dialysis.

WHERE TO STAY

Based on patients' medical needs, they should plan ahead and make arrangements for where they will stay during a hurricane. If constant electrical power is a requirement, patients must make sure the location they choose to stay has backup electrical power from a generator. Examples of locations where patients can stay during a storm include:

1. Out of Town – leaving the area that is in the path of the hurricane is the best way to avoid being placed in a situation in which your medical needs could be complicated by the destruction of a hurricane.
2. At Home – if you do not live in an evacuation zone, a properly secured home is often the best place to stay.
3. With family or friends – if you are in an evacuation zone, the best place to stay is often at the home of family or friends in a properly secured dwelling.
4. Hotel – if you are in an evacuation zone, a properly secured hotel outside the evacuation zone is an option.
5. Red Cross Shelter – should only be considered as a last resort. NOT for patients with special medical needs.
6. County Special Care Unit – only for patients with special medical needs that meet eligibility requirements. All patients should be pre-registered. For more information please call PBC Emergency Management at (561) 712-6400 and ask to speak with a Special Needs Coordinator.

HOSPITALS DURING A HURRICANE

- Hospitals are NOT an option for general sheltering during a hurricane.
- Hospitals are reserved as the place to treat life threatening situations.
- Hospitals will continue to accept emergency and/or trauma patients.
- Many hospitals will shelter pregnant women with a physician's referral who are 36 weeks or greater or at high risk for pre-term labor.
- Hospitals are not able to dispense medication to the public so patients must make arrangements to have at least a two week supply on hand through their physician and retail pharmacy.

PHYSICIAN OFFICES DURING A HURRICANE

Physician offices like all other businesses close prior to a hurricane to allow staff to complete their personal hurricane preparations. As a result, patients should:

- Make sure all refills on prescriptions are up to date and at least a two week supply is on hand.
- Understand their physician's "On-Call" policy should the office be unable to re-open following the storm.
- Check local TV and Radio for additional information.

CHECKLIST OF ITEMS TO HAVE OR BRING TO THE LOCATION WHERE YOU STAY DURING THE STORM

- List of current medications and a two week supply of your medications (Pharmacies may be closed for extended periods of time).
- Documentation of specific medical information.
- Medical equipment (if applicable) and name and contact information for your equipment and supply vendor.
- Oxygen equipment such as nebulizers and concentrators.
- Diabetic equipment and supplies such as meters, strips, insulin, and syringes.
- Canes, wheelchairs, and walkers
- Personal hygiene items including deodorant, toothpaste/toothbrush, wash cloth, towel, soap, etc.
- Infant care items such as formula, diapers, baby food, etc.
- Caregiver if not independent.
- Sleeping equipment – cot, pillow, blanket, etc.
- Extra clothing, flashlight, radio, extra batteries, cell phone with charger, entertainment items, toys for children, non-perishable foods for snacks, etc.
- DO NOT BRING pets, firearms, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or perishable foods.

