

Hurricane Medicine.

It is another August and another chance to do our best preparation for hurricanes and other storms. All of us hope we won't have a catastrophe here in Central Florida. After all, other people evacuate to our area! How much preparation do we need? Now that it has been a few years since this area had the 1,2,3 punch of Charley, Frances, and Jeanne, complacency is tempting. Our best time to prepare, however, is before any storm takes aim at our locale. No need to panic, but why not prepare. Check with your favorite local newspaper or media outlet for general preparation materials. Most of these contain lists of what to buy and how to stay safe. It is worth reviewing.

Since Hurricane Katrina, there are lots of new sources for hurricane preparedness. One of my favorite is the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Their site is <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/readiness.asp>

Outside of buying things for your home, the site emphasizes overall preparation such as: Obtain and secure emergency numbers ahead of time. You may have your doctor's number on your phone, but how about non-911 emergency numbers?

Know your closest evacuation shelter. Do you or your family have special needs? It is easy to check on where you can go when the phone lines/towers are working. Pets can only stay at specific shelters.

Do you know how to shut down power and utilities to your home? Review where all your circuit breakers and utilities are.

Prepare to protect all of your electrical gadgets as well as your windows. Plastic bags routinely do not cover large TV's.

Have working fire extinguishers easily available.

Protect important documents.

Have first aid and medicines available ahead of time.

Take a look at what each person in your family needs on a daily basis and prepare to have a 5 day supply.

Water; 1 gallon per person per day minimum.

Medicines are a particular concern to many people.

Have an extra 2 week supply of everything you use medically.

Prepare a dry and temperature safe place for your medications.

Remember insulin is ok for up to 28 days out of refrigeration. Just avoid direct sunlight or very hot temperatures.

A hint; double Styrofoam insulation is how medical companies ship temperature sensitive drugs.

There is a new service this year for prescription medicine information; the In Case of Emergency Prescription Database. The site is at www.icerx.org and is there to make sure you can get an accurate prescription even if you cannot get to your usual doctor or pharmacy.

Preparing now can help avoid confusion and mistakes in a storm.