



Hurricane Preparedness for New and Expectant Parents

Preparing for the birth of a child can be both joyful and stressful. Expecting during or near hurricane season can add an additional layer of worry and stress. You may be concerned about how a hurricane could disrupt your birth plan or how to keep you and your baby safe if there is a storm. Planning ahead can provide some ease to this additional stress.

Talk with your Doctor or Medical Care Team Ahead of Time

MAKE SURE TO DISCUSS:



If your expected birthing supports are unavailable (i.e., doula or loved ones), explore other available options.

If you have other children, reach out to your support network to develop a plan to help care for them during this time.

Remember what is under your control, such as practicing positive coping skills.

Create a Backup Birth Plan

It is disappointing to have a hurricane or storm disrupt the birth experience you are hoping for. Planning ahead can help minimize those disruptions.

Give yourself space to feel disappointed, use your preferred calming strategies, and lean on your social supports.

Create a Plan with Your Doctor or Medical Care Team

Medical providers and facilities will all have different policies and protocols during a hurricane. Knowing ahead of time how things may change can help you make the best plan for your care during a storm.

Use the attached worksheet to guide your discussion and print a copy to keep in your emergency kit.



CREATE A PLAN



Shelter Plan

Hurricanes or storms may require you to take shelter and seek a safe location. This could include sheltering in your own home, at work, or in a mass care shelter. Evacuating to another location may be the safest choice. This could be to another part of the city, for example, away from the coast and potential storm surge. In some cases (e.g., island communities), evacuation options may be limited to sheltering in place despite hazardous conditions.

Identify several shelter options in advance, if possible.

This can include taking shelter with family members or other members of your support group.

Plan how you would get there

Consider closeness to medical facilities, hospitals, and special needs accommodations

Identify where to get medical care at new locations

Discuss with your provider any suggestions they have

Consider ways to minimize exposure to viruses, illness and hazards

Communication Plan

Extended power outages and cell phone disruptions can mean that you won't always be able to look up numbers, use the internet, or call or text contacts with your cell phone.

Creating a physical list of important numbers and places ahead of time can make communicating easier



Get information about local shelters

- Text SHELTER and Zip code to 43362
- Visit www.disasterassistance.gov
- Download the FEMA mobile app



Learn your evacuation routes

- Ready.gov/evacuation

Flood water can contain bacteria and pollutants that can harm both mother and baby. Avoid flood waters whenever possible.



To Create a Communication Plan:

- Gather local emergency contact information (e.g. police, emergency response, shelters, hospitals).
- Emotional support is very important. Develop a plan to keep in touch with your loved ones.
- Consider gathering contact information from:



Out of State
Emergency
Contact



OBGYN/
Midwife



Family
Supports



Birthing
locations



Therapist



Doula



Emergency
care line



Childcare



Pharmacy

Gather Needed Supplies

- ✓ Create an emergency supply kit for 7-14 days
- ✓ Go to [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for ideas
- ✓ Create emergency kits for other children and family members in the household



Create a hospital “to-go” bag. Include all needed items for a hospital stay and a newborn. This could include:

diapers, blankets and clothing for you and baby, insurance card, sterile water, formula ready to feed, bottles, sanitation items, nipples, breastfeeding supplies, identification card, medications refills if possible, prenatal vitamins

Signs of Needing Additional Support

Persistent sadness, tearfulness, or crying

Feelings of guilt, shame, or inadequacy

Anxiety or panic attacks

Loss of interest in activities you usually enjoyed

Difficulty bonding with the baby

Chronic fatigue and changes in sleep

Feeling constantly overwhelmed

Withdrawing from others

Thoughts of harming yourself or the baby



Connect with a medical or mental health provider or call 988 to seek additional support.

Caring for Yourself

Experiencing a hurricane or storm can be a stressful and scary experience. Giving birth during or after one adds even more stress.

Practice coping skills that can help you during times of stress, such as:

mindfulness

breathing exercises

stretching and relaxing tense muscles

doing positive activities

talking to friends and family

asking for help

Caring for Your Newborn

Most babies are born safely during hurricanes or storms and go on to live healthy lives.

Be mindful of potential environmental hazards after a storm and develop a plan to minimize exposures and seek care if needed. These can include:



Extreme heat



Mosquito-borne diseases



Unsafe water



Exposure to toxic fumes



Exposure to mold

Discuss with your medical care team (e.g. pediatrician, your OB/GYN, midwife) ways to minimize exposure and seek care for you or your baby if needed.

For more information: <http://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/natural-disasters/>

After a hurricane or a storm, there may be extended periods of loss of power, running water, internet, communications, and difficulty accessing basic needs for yourself and baby. Contact local community organizations, food banks, places of worship, the Red Cross, FEMA.gov, and neighbors for assistance.

For local information, call 2-1-1