



# Helping Patients Establish a Hurricane Action Plan

For Providers

Hurricanes are becoming more intense with increased rainfall and coastal flooding which can exacerbate chronic health conditions and disrupt access to essential services such as power, water, and healthcare access.

*Below is guidance to help you prepare for completion of the **Hurricane Action Plan and Tip Sheet** included in this toolkit with your patients, which provides anticipatory guidance on what to do before, during and after a hurricane.*

## Before a hurricane

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### Make sure your patients and their families know the risks of hurricanes

**Ask:** Do you know the risks to your health during and after a hurricane?

Discuss with your patient how hurricanes may affect their health. You can find information to discuss in the **Hurricanes and Health** overview document.

### Assess if and how patients access weather reports and extreme weather warnings

**Ask:** do you know how to learn if there is a risk of a hurricane near where you live?

If not, you can suggest the national hurricane center website, their phone weather app, [weather.com](https://www.weather.com), or their local news television station or [riskfactor.com](https://www.riskfactor.com). For more detailed instructions, you can provide the **Hurricane Action Plan and Tip Sheet**.

### Encourage patients to complete the **Hurricane Action Plan and Tip Sheet** well before a storm is imminent

**Ask:** have you completed a hurricane action plan?

Establishing a plan before there is an imminent threat of a hurricane can be lifesaving, especially if a patient requires assistance to evacuate. We encourage patients to complete the evacuation section of the **Hurricane Action Plan and Tip Sheet**; doing so with a member of their healthcare team may be especially helpful.

## During a hurricane

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### Determine patients' likelihood of following an evacuation order and help them develop an evacuation plan

**Ask:** If there was an evacuation order, would you evacuate?

For individuals with chronic medical conditions or who rely on electric medical devices, such as ventilators, reviewing the risks from hurricanes may help motivate them to evacuate when necessary.

**Ask:** If you need to evacuate, where will you go?

**Ask:** If you need to evacuate, how will you do so? Will you need help to evacuate? If so, who will you call?

If a high-risk patient will not have the needed assistance to evacuate, a provider can ask permission to share the patient’s contact information with local emergency managers.

## After a hurricane

### Make sure their home is safe to enter and patients know health risks after hurricanes

**Ask:** Do you know the risks to your health after a hurricane or flood?

Help your patient identify their health risks after hurricanes and flooding. You can find information to discuss in the [Hurricanes and Health](#) and [Floods and Health](#) document.

### Check in with your patients about control of long-term medical conditions and any mental health concerns after the hurricane

After a hurricane can be a particularly stressful time, with patients potentially experiencing exacerbations of chronic disease, as well as issues accessing clean food, water, and shelter. Consider proactively checking in with patients, particularly higher risk patients who have medical comorbidities or are living with limited mobility.

**Ask:** How is your health doing after the hurricane? Do you have access to all the things you need, like food, water, shelter?

There can also be significant mental health stresses after a hurricane, and it is important to bring it up and offer any local resources.

**Ask:** How is your mental health after the hurricane? Do you have all the resources you need?

## Notes:

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