Helpline

June 2006

Planning for the 2006 Hurricane Season

Are You Prepared?

Are you ready for Hurricane Season? Do you have a written plan? “Hurricane Season” officially begins June 1st and ends November 30th. According to experts, the number and intensity of storms is increasing each year. Last year Florida had a record number of storms to hit our state. No one could predict the number of storms that came last year and if it could happen again this season. The only thing to do is to be prepared.

The best way to prepare for potential storms is to develop a Hurricane Plan that takes into consideration your family’s individual circumstances and needs. Begin putting together your plan early. Follow these 10 simple steps to make sure you are ready:

4) Get an extra month of your prescriptions filled.
5) Have your pets vaccinated and know what you’ll do with them.
6) Inspect your shutters to make sure they work and fit properly.
7) Make preparations for securing or moving your boat.
8) Check your hurricane supplies and replenish batteries.
9) Shop for water and non-perishable foods. Water – Store at least one gallon per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation) for each family member for 7 days. Food – Store enough for each family member to last at least 7 days.
10) Review your neighborhood evacuation plan.

Think Nutrition During The Hurricane Season

Buy early and stock up. Gathering hurricane supplies should be a family affair with input from each member.

Everyone has different wants, needs and tastes, so all these need consideration during planning.

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Extension Faculty
Family & Consumer Sciences
Set aside some time to design daily menus covering one or two weeks, and the amount of groceries needed for your plan. Think of how it will most likely be hot weather with no electricity, so food choices should require no refrigeration. Plan at least 2 quarts of water per person daily for drinking, and additional water for cooking. Filling the tub with water is for other uses.

Try putting food supplies in large brown grocery bags, staple them shut, label as hurricane supplies and put in large waterproof plastic bags. You could also use a large waterproof container with a lid. Store in your pantry so food supplies will be ready when needed. Avoid using your hurricane supplies before the storm, but use them up after the season is over or donate to a food pantry to avoid the food expiring.

The following sections will help you plan your daily 3-meal menus, and also include healthy snacks throughout the day. Just as important are the supplies that go along with your food preparation, remembering that you are trying to cover both the safety and cleanliness of preparing meals during this disaster time frame. Some people also need to think of elderly neighbors who probably couldn’t fend for themselves or eat properly during this time, so perhaps include them in your planning process.

FOOD OVERVIEW
Have on hand:
• at least one portable cooler
• food for infants and the elderly
• food for pets
• order extra medication if necessary and
• remember to use proper hand washing at all times!

Be sure to include balanced nutrition in your planning.

MEAT GROUP
• meat soups • canned: tuna, ham, salmon, sardines, chili, corned beef hash, ravioli, beans (kidney, lima, black eyed peas, lentils, etc.) • peanut butter • bean spreads • packaged nuts (unsalted, dry roasted, peanuts, walnuts, almonds, etc.) • beef or turkey jerky • Vienna sausage

MILK GROUP
• non-fat milk (powdered, canned or shelf stable) • Ensure • puddings • nutritional drinks • processed cheese spread

FRUIT GROUP
• canned fruit in its own juice • dried fruit • 100% fruit juice • trail mix with fruit • packaged: raisins, apricots, cranberries, etc. • fruit cocktail • unsweetened applesauce

VEGETABLE GROUP
• canned vegetables and soups • canned 3-bean salad, mushrooms • salsa • spaghetti sauce • purchase just before storm: fresh carrots, broccoli, etc.

BREAD GROUP
• breakfast cereal • crackers • breakfast/nutrition bars • rice cakes • brown bread with raisins • melba toast • dry pasta • taco shells • chips • vanilla wafers • bread sticks • muffins • graham crackers • pretzels • purchase just before storm: fresh bread, round flat bread for wraps

EXTRA
• bottled water, Gatorade, instant ice tea, instant coffee, tea bags, powdered drink mixes • cream soups
• jelly • small packets of ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise • granola bars, fruit bars • infant food, formula • food for special diets

COOKING
• fondue pot with sterno (canned heat) • camping stove • grill with burners • extra propane or charcoal for the grill • heavy duty aluminum foil • disposable aluminum pans • hand operated can opener • bottle opener • fire extinguisher (ABC type) • matches in a water proof container • sunscreen to use when grilling outdoors • first aid kit • NEVER USE CHARCOAL INSIDE YOUR HOUSE OR GARAGE - the smoke and fumes are deadly. Gas grills need to be outside also for safety and fire hazards.

TABLE SETTING
• Plastic utensils: knives, spoons and forks • paper plates and bowls, paper towels, napkins.

CLEAN UP
• kitchen gloves • garbage bags/ties • baby wipes • disinfecting wipes • sponges • bleach and medicine dropper • storage container or bucket with tight fitting lid • extra zip lock bags of all sizes • hand sanitizer

SUPPLIES
• assorted batteries, extra cell phone battery, extra bulbs, flash lights, lanterns, and candles • battery operated TV and radio • room fans (if on generator) • toilet paper • diapers and other infant non-food supplies • fill red gas cans with extra gas if you have a generator

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
• cash to have on hand to cover expenses in the event the power goes out • fill your car with gas • several cans of “Fix a Flat” tire repair kit • hard soled shoes (in case of glass breakage) • insect repellant • medium sized heavy plastic bags for human waste disposal • consider a popup tent to sleep in • and place important papers in a waterproof carrier.

SAMPLE MENU

Breakfast
orange juice • ready to eat cereal or instant oatmeal • small box of raisins • breakfast bar with fruit • skim milk • tea or coffee

Lunch
chunky beef soup (ready to eat style that only needs heating) • crackers • carrot & celery sticks • nuts • fruit cup • vanilla wafers • tea or coffee

Dinner
cheese or peanut butter sandwich • 3-bean salad (canned) • broccoli florets • apple • fat free pudding cup • skim milk • tea or coffee

Notes: Just before storm buy bread, fresh broccoli, apples and other fruits and vegetables that do not require refrigeration. It’s always smart to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

This article was designed by the University of Florida Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Agents of South Florida - Broward, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe & Palm Beach Counties.
Generator Safety
-By Lt. Shanti Hall

When operating a generator, keep the following in mind:

- All gas-powered engines emit Carbon Monoxide, a colorless, odorless gas that can build up to fatally toxic levels in the environment. Generators must only be operated outside of inhabited structures in a well-ventilated area and should never be placed anywhere near windows, doors, vents or other openings.
- If you’re going to spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars on a generator, pitch in the extra twenty or thirty bucks for a CO detector. That’s a tremendous bargain for the life safety benefit.
- Never operate a generator on the balcony of a multi-unit structure. The boundaries of most balconies force you to place the generator way too close to your own living areas as well as those of your neighbors.
- Never attempt to refuel a generator while it is running or still hot. Turn it off and allow it to cool before adding fuel. Take extreme care not to spill fuel onto the generator or the surrounding area.
- Read your generator’s manual very carefully. Follow all directions and pay close attention to the electrical load rating. Never overload the generator.
- Never attempt to connect a portable generator to the main electrical panel in your home. Not only is this very dangerous for occupants, it is also fatally dangerous for electrical workers who are trying to restore power.

If you’re pretty sure you’re done with your generator (or at least hoping you’re done with it) here are some tips for safe storage:

- Store the generator in a dry, well-ventilated area with the fuel tank empty.
- Give it a good cleaning before storing. Remove traces of oil, dirt and other foreign matter.
- Do not store near fuel supplies.
- Do not store near appliances such as water heaters or pumps, especially if they are gas-powered.
- When you pull your generator out after any storage period, remember to inspect it carefully for broken or missing parts.

Source: http://prepare.miamidade.gov/generator.asp

Trend Tracking

Here are a few current trends that have changed our lives. You may not be aware of how they can influence your children.

Cyberbullies

Cyberbullying looms like a dark shadow. A cyberbully sends hateful e-mails or leaves threatening cell phone messages. Because school-age cyberbullies act anonymously, the sender may be a child’s best friend. If your child carries a cell phone, that opens a new channel for negative and hurtful messages. Technology has made it easy for children to be mean to one another.

Cyberbullies are hard to track, so attempts should be made to prevent problems. For example, you might check the computer and cell phones, with your child, and ask about each person in his electronic address books. Avoid scaring him; explain you’re concerned about addresses of people he doesn’t know well.

Some parents even set a rule: “The only names in your address books should be people I can visit.” Deleting information for virtual friends can be especially tough if a long online list is viewed as a status symbol at school. But even though it’s the 21st century, the age-old advice of safety first is still true.

Edutainment

On a lighter note, edutainment is a new form of media that simultaneously teaches and entertains. Practicing multiplication tables was never this much fun when I was in school! Edutainment is everywhere; I’ve even pulled learning software from a breakfast cereal box.
As parents, we know children can learn concepts embedded in media. But as an educator, I wonder what researchers will discover when they move past the glitz of high-definition screens. Do audio learners retain information presented on a screen? Which academic skills are more effectively presented in real time? There’s a lot we still don’t know about edu-tainment and its effects.

**Insulated kids**

While inappropriate media exposure causes children to lose their innocence and grow up too fast, one of the biggest challenges may be overprotecting children.

Have you seen children grow up without having lived through failure? Children who fall apart when they don’t make the team? Students who deny they’re earned an average test score?

It’s tempting to protect our kids from failure. We want our children to feel good about themselves. If we’re honest, we want our kids to shine so we can glow in their reflection.

While trend tracking, I learned that 36 percent of moms will do some of their children’s homework! Though well-intentioned, these parents are not helping their kids.

Nor is it helpful to praise kids excessively for every little thing they do. Perhaps you’ve heard the “good job” litany that parents use when a child eats his broccoli, takes off his shoes or combs his hair. When overdone, aggrandizing accomplishments becomes hollow. Instead, we should praise our children when it’s appropriate and offer honest, constructive suggestions when necessary.

Responsible parenting allows children to cope with and learn from disappointment, failure and frustration, while offering encouragement as they go through it.

**Playpen sports**

Learning is at the core of playpen sports. As summer approaches, we’ll see even more toddler and preschool classes practicing sport fundamentals in structured class situations. Active play has always been an important part of childhood, but watching a tennis instructor lecture 4-year-olds about the game underlines the danger of pushing a child to achieve in sports at a younger and younger age.

We need to get kids moving, and active play is important. But playing flashlight tag on the front lawn or catching fireflies at dusk is more developmentally appropriate than plopping a 2-year old in front of a video that repeats the phrase “Hit the Baseball” against a backdrop of ball diamonds.

Coaches have observed an epidemic of burnout that has hit junior high teams. Parents have commented that 10-year-olds are tired of playing soccer because they’ve been “playing forever.”

Trends come and go. Always consider the question what is best for my children?” Stay alert to what your children are saying, watching and searing. Trend savvy parents make wise choices.

Article taken from Mary Manz Simon, Ph.D. in education, author of Trend-Savvy Parenting in the May issue of Focus on the Family magazine.

**Summer Fun**

When summer is in the air, it’s time to shut down the game console and turn off the videos. Round up the family and head outdoors to experience the thrill of flying and flowing bubbles.

**Go Fly A Kite**

Any day with light, steady winds has kite-flying potential. Contrary to what you might think, strong or gusty winds aren’t favored for kite flying. Indeed, when the weather reports forecast moderate winds of 5 to 15 mph, that’s kite weather—especially for kite-flying rookies.

With a kite in tow, head for a large, open area far from trees, power lines, and busy roadways. Avoid locations near airports or tall buildings. Parks, beaches, and fields with wide-open spaces are perfect—they’ll give you the room you need to let out lots of line so your kite can soar.
FLY BY THE RULES

- Never fly a kite during rain or lightning. (Wise old Ben Franklin was extremely fortunate to have not gotten zapped during his legendary electricity experiment.)
- Stay away from power lines. If your kite ever gets tangled in power lines, immediately release the string and walk away.
- Don’t fly your kite over roads or near steep slopes.
- Wear gloves to prevent string burns, especially when flying a large kite.
- Maintain a safe distance from other people, especially other kite flyers whose lines could tangle with yours.
- If line does become tangled with another line, resist the temptation to yank on it. Walk to the other flyer, wait for the tangle to slide down the strings, then unwrap it.
- Be considerate of those around you. Maintain control of your kite as much as possible.
- Always provide adult supervision for young kite flyers.

Celebrate Fly a Kite Day on June 15 – the anniversary of Ben Franklin’s historic 1752 kite experiment.

For more about Ben Franklin and Instructions for making a kite visit [www.pbs.org/benfranklin](http://www.pbs.org/benfranklin) Kite fliers Association website: [www.aka.kite.org](http://www.aka.kite.org)

Bubble Solution Recipes

Mix one cup of dish soap and 4 cups of water. The best dish soaps to use when making homemade bubbles are Dawn or Joy. To make the bubbles last longer and be more colorful, add a 1/2 cup of White Karo Syrup. The bubble solution is ready to use immediately, but it works even better when left overnight.

To make “No Tear Bubbles,” mix 12 cups of water with 4 tablespoons of White Karo Syrup and add 1 cup of baby shampoo and mix. Add food coloring to make unusually colored bubbles!

Easy-to-Make Bubble Wands

For children who are not ready to blow their own bubbles, take a fly swatter, fruit containers (the green kind made with a plastic mesh) or a plastic 6-pack soda holder, dip it in the solution, hold it up – and run!

Make bubble blowers from recyclable materials. Paper towel tubes, frozen orange juice containers with both ends off, plastic lids with the centers cut out, and paper cups with bottoms ripped out work exceptionally well. Model how to blow a slow and steady stream of air onto the soap film to create a bubble.

Bubblicious Ideas

Take turns blowing bubbles and together count the bubbles as they come out or count the bubbles that you catch and pop.

In a bowl, make bubbles inside of bubbles. (Give your child a straw with a hole near the top to prevent children from sucking the soap up.) Or try adding food coloring to the solution and laying a paper over the bubbles to make a print.

Always supervise young children when playing with bubbles or other art materials.

Helping your Family Prepare Before a Disaster

Don’t be reluctant to talk with your family about the possibility of a hurricane, fire, tornado, or flood. Thought and action before the disaster hits usually helps family members react wisely. Families that work together to prepare for
the problem will cope better than those who do not take precautions. Consider how your children might react in a disaster, how you might react, and how the crisis could effect each person’s emotional and physical well-being. Plan in advance for how to deal with a crisis situation.

For the Entire Family …

- Make emergency plans as outlined by the Civil Service, Red Cross, or other disaster team. Make sure you have a Family Disaster Plan, and practice it so that everyone will remember what to do when a disaster does occur. If you have a disaster readiness kit in your home, make sure that everyone knows where it is located.

- Discuss and practice these plans with your family before a disaster strikes.

- Work together to help your children or other dependents understand the procedures. These steps will allow each family member to think through a potential crisis situation without the tension of a real emergency.

For Children…

- Give children exact steps to follow. Talking, practicing, and actively preparing together will help children understand strange occurrences like a hurricane. Tell your older children how to shut off utilities like gas and electricity.

- Children should know parent’s first and last names, their home address, and home phone number. They should also know the name and number of a family member who can help if they get separated. Put a list of these in a prominent location, like on the refrigerator. Make sure your children know where the family will meet in case anyone gets separated. Some public and private service agencies offer child ID cards to carry important information on.

- Help children practice dialing 911, the telephone operator, fire station, and ambulance. (Keep the phone on the hook!) Teach children how to recognize danger signals.

- Read news stories of family or community problems and emergencies. Talk about how your family would handle the situation. This gives your children the time to think through and plan actions for real life crises.

- Play “Let’s Pretend” with preschoolers. Discuss a situation that might arise in your area and then ask, “What would you do?”

- Provide basic supplies for a variety of possible situations. Stock a box with games, books, and hobby materials for sitting out emergencies. Take this opportunity to enhance family relations. Play games, sing favorite songs, read and discuss topics. Most of all talk and get to know your children’s interests better. Make sure emergency supplies of food, diapers, and drinks are available, as recommended by disaster teams.

- Involve children in preparing for and carrying out emergency plans. All children need and want to carry out important roles. This helps them feel a part of the family and prepares them to cope with later situations.

For Older Adults…

- If you have older or disabled relatives living at home, review emergency procedures with them.

- If special transportation or assistance is necessary in an emergency, arrange this in advance.

- If a relative lives in a nursing home, discuss evacuation procedures with the staff and make needed plans.

After the Disaster: Time for Recovery

Immediately after the disaster, try to reduce your child’s fear and anxiety.

Keep the family together. While you look for housing and assistance, you may want to leave your children with relatives or friends. Instead, keep the family together as much as possible and make children a part of what you are doing to get the family back on its feet. Children get anxious, and they’ll worry that their parents won’t return.
Calmly and firmly explain the situation. As best you can, tell children what you know about the disaster. Explain what will happen next. For example, say, “Tonight, we will all stay together in the shelter.” Get down to the child’s eye level and talk to him or her.

Encourage children to talk. Let children talk about the disaster and ask questions as much as possible include the entire family in the discussion.

Include children in recovery activities. Give children chores that are their responsibility. This will help children feel they are part of the recovery. Having a task will help them understand that everything will be all right.

Feelings of fear are healthy and natural for adults and children. But as an adult, you need to keep control of the situation. When you’re sure that danger has passed, concentrate on your child’s emotional needs by asking the child what’s uppermost in his or her mind. Having children participate in the family’s recovery activities will help them feel that their life will return to “normal.” Your response during this time may have a lasting impact.

Be aware that after a disaster, children are most afraid that—

- The event will happen again.
- Someone will be injured or killed.
- They will be separated from the family.
- They will be left alone.

You can help children cope by understanding what causes their anxieties and fears. Reassure them with firmness and love. Your children will realize that life will eventually return to normal. If a child does not respond to the above suggestions, seek help from a mental health specialist or a member of the clergy.

Source: North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the American Red Cross & FEMA

It is the policy of the Miami-Dade County to comply with all the requirements of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). For sign language interpreter services, call (305) 670-9099 five days in advance. For materials in accessible format call the Consumer Services Department (CSD), for ADA complaints, call CSD at (305) 375-3566