

Monterey County Health Department Preparedness Minute

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Preparedness and Diabetes



If you or a loved one is a diabetic, you know that diabetes comes with a special set of day-to-day challenges. An emergency can be difficult for a diabetic to cope with if not prepared. A power outage or an earthquake can disrupt a diabetic's schedule, add stress and affect their health and well being.

The first 72 hours are critical in responding to an emergency, these are the hours that you will most likely be on your own and it is critical to prepare for especially those with a chronic illness like diabetes.

Emergency Medical Supplies

In order to better cope with an emergency, diabetics are encouraged to have on hand:

- ✓ Copy of emergency information and medical list, including, extra copies of prescriptions
- ✓ Insulin or pills (include all medications taken daily including over the counter medications)
- ✓ Syringes
- ✓ A meter to measure blood sugar
- ✓ Lancing device and lancets
- ✓ Insulin pump supplies (if on insulin pump)
- ✓ Glucagon Emergency Kit (if on insulin)
- ✓ Quick acting carbohydrate (for example, glucose tablets, orange juice, etc.)
- ✓ Longer lasting carbohydrate sources (for example, cheese and crackers)
- ✓ Alcohol swabs, cotton balls & tissues
- ✓ Strips for your meter
- ✓ Blood sugar diary
- ✓ Urine ketone testing strips
- ✓ Sharps container for used lancets & syringes

Critical things to remember about blood sugar

Stress can cause a rise in blood sugar.

Erratic mealtimes can cause changes in blood sugar.

Excessive work to repair damage caused by the disaster (without stopping for snacks) can lower blood sugar.

Excessive exercise when blood sugar is over 250mg can cause blood sugar to go higher.



Don't forget to protect feet

Check feet daily for an irritation, infection, open sores or blisters. Disaster debris can increase risk for injury. Heat, cold, excessive dampness and inability to change footwear can lead to infection, especially if blood sugar is high. **Never go without shoes.**

The purpose of this short publication is to inform Monterey County staff about preparedness issues ranging from emerging communicable diseases to personal preparedness. If there is a specific topic you or your staff are interested in please contact the Preparedness Program at klahnk@co.monterey.ca.us.

Insulin Information

- ◆ Insulin may be stored at room temperature (59° - 86°F) for 28 days.
- ◆ Insulin pens in use can be stored at room temperature according to manufacturer's directions.
- ◆ Insulin should not be exposed to excessive light, heat or cold.
- ◆ Regular and Lantus insulins should be clear.
- ◆ NPH, Lente, Ultralente, 75/25, 50/50, and 70/30 insulins should be uniformly cloudy before rotating.
- ◆ Insulin that clumps or sticks to the sides of the bottle should not be used.
- ◆ Although reuse of your insulin syringes is not generally recommended, in life and death situations, you have to alter this policy. **Do not** share your insulin syringes with other people.
- ◆ If there are specific questions about the insulin individuals can call the manufacturer
Lilly: 1-800-545-5979 Aventis: 1-800-633-1610 Novo Nordisk: 1-800-727-6500



For more information regarding insulin storage, switching between insulin products and safe drug use in an emergency visit the Food and Drug Administration's at www.fda.gov/cder/emergency

Other helpful tips

If you are relocated or affected by a disaster, call your doctors as soon as possible to touch base and maintain the continuity of your medical care

If you are a parent of a child with diabetes, make sure that you clearly identify which school staff members will assist your child in the event of an emergency

If you are displaced or need to evacuate, identify yourself immediately as a person with diabetes and report any related conditions so that authorities can provide for proper medical care. Always wear medical alert tags or bracelets that identify you as a person with diabetes



**Wear diabetes
identification at all times**

Ensure that a relative or close friend, living outside your city or state, has a complete list of your medications and dosage instructions, as well as contact information for your current physician(s)

Maintain your meal plan to the best of your ability during an emergency

Drink plenty of liquids

Have a source of quick acting sugar with you at all times.

If you need medical assistance / or are out of all medications, food, and cannot reach your doctor, immediately:

- ◆ Go to the nearest hospital; or
- ◆ Call 911; or
- ◆ Go to an Emergency Medical Center



This issue of *Preparedness Minute* is brought to you by the Monterey County Health Department's Preparedness Program. For more information Contact:

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