



Disaster Preparedness for Children with Special Nutrition Needs

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OBJECTIVES:

- Complete needs assessment related to disaster preparedness recommendations for families of children with special health care needs (CSHCN) and/or children with special nutrition needs (CSNN)
- Identify “gaps” in current disaster preparedness recommendations through literature review and key stakeholder interviews
- Develop disaster preparedness recommendations for families of CSNN
- Develop education materials to communicate recommendations for disaster preparedness to families of CSNN and health care providers

BACKGROUND:

- CSHCN require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required generally by children
- CSHCN may have special nutrition needs and require specialized formula and medical equipment to provide adequate nutrition
- Families of CSHCN and/or CSNN will have to take additional steps to adequately prepare for a disaster
- No recommendations exist to provide appropriate preparedness recommendations for families of CSNN
- Providing recommendations is essential in ensuring families of CSNN have appropriate information available to attain an adequate level of preparedness

RESULTS



Disaster Preparedness For Children with Special Nutrition Needs

You work hard everyday to make sure your child meets their nutrition needs. Have you ever thought about how you can prepare to meet your child's nutrition needs during a disaster? Families of children with special nutrition needs will have to take additional steps to prepare for disasters and consider things such as special formulas, feeding equipment, additional supplies and special skills that would not be needed by the typical family.

The following checklist will help your family prepare for your child's special nutrition needs in case of a disaster.

Basic Preparedness for your Child's Special Needs:

- Complete an emergency information form for your child with the help of a health care provider (go to: www.asp.org/advocacy/blankform.pdf)
- Purchase back-up batteries or a generator to power equipment that may require electricity.
- Have a back up of supplies you will need to feed or care for your child (feeding bags and tubing, syringes, Mickey buttons, catheters, etc.)
- Prepare smaller emergency travel kits in case you have to evacuate your home.
- Purchase a battery powered or hand-cranked weather radio.
- Keep extra formula or a travel kit in your car.
- Store extra supplies at school or child care programs.
- Have a two week supply of any special formula and water (1 gallon of water per person per day).
- Store extra supplies at school or child care programs.
- Have a two week supply of medications, both prescription and non-prescription.
- Contact your local police and fire departments and let them know you have a child with special needs.
- Rotate formula and medications in your disaster kit on a regular basis to avoid spoiling.
- Get a medical alert and/or identification bracelet for your child. Go to www.medicalert.org/

Preparing for your Child's Special Nutrition Needs:

- Create a plan to stay two weeks ahead on your child's supply of formula and medications. Mark dates on your calendar and leave reminders cards with your child's formula and medications.
- Know how to measure your child's formula without a scale. This includes knowing how to use measuring cups to prepare formula.
- Learn how to prepare your child's formula without power. This may include having hand blenders or battery powered hand blenders as part of your disaster kit.
- Talk with your health care provider about alternative formulas and foods your child may have. Make a list of these items and include this information in your disaster kits and emergency information forms.
- If you use a feeding pump, have back-up equipment on hand to give feedings with feeding bags or syringes if your child can tolerate feedings without a pump.
- Speak with your child's health care provider about how to ration formula and food in times of shortage. Know your child's limitations and include this information in your care plan.
- Have contact information for suppliers of formula and medical equipment. Know their emergency plan and ask for their cell, home, and pager numbers and email addresses. Include this information in your care plan.
- Identify families in your area who have similar needs as your own. Finding families who use similar formulas and/or medical equipment may be very helpful.

Have a Disaster Plan for your Family:

- Prepare a family emergency plan (go to: http://www.ready.gov/america/_downloads/rep_download/FamilyPlan_All.pdf)
- Pick an out-of-state contact who can be reached most times of the day and provide them with your child's emergency information forms. Include their contact information in your family emergency plan.
- Prepare disaster kits for every member of your family (go to: <http://www.redcross.org/>)
- Identify people who are willing to help your family in an emergency. Make them aware of your family plan and your child's care plan.
- Decide on family meeting places. Pick one place in your neighborhood and one place outside of your neighborhood. Include this information in your family emergency plan.
- Emergency shelters will allow you to use their resources during an emergency even if you are not staying there. You may be able to recharge batteries, store items that need refrigeration, and receive medical care at shelters that provide these services.
- Know the emergency plan for your child care program or school. Provide them with copies of your family/child emergency plan and a small supply kit. Ask them to provide you with emergency contact information, such as phone numbers and email addresses.
- Text messaging and e-mail may be the best way to communicate during an emergency. Local calling may not be possible, but long distance calling may work.

Additional Resources:

- Disaster Preparedness Resources:
 - www.redcross.org/
 - www.ready.gov/america/index.html
 - www.doh.wa.gov/ohp/ohp/default.htm
- Emergency Resource Guide (preparedness guidelines for individuals with disabilities and types of disasters to prepare for):
 - www.doh.wa.gov/ohp/handbook/hbk_pdf/EmerResKit.pdf
- Additional Preparedness Forms for Children with Special Health Care Needs:
 - <http://cshcn.org/download-documents>
 - For the Above Link, see Recommended the Following Forms: 1) Activities of Daily Living 2) Equipment and Supplies List 3) Getting to Know Me
- Medical Alert Bracelets:
 - www.medicalert.org/

METHODS:

Needs assessment

- Literature review of preparedness recommendations put forth by various organizations and agencies
- Key stakeholder interviews with professionals having a background in providing services for CSHCN and/or working in the field of disaster preparedness, planning and management
- Identification of “gaps” in current recommendations, causes for gaps, and opportunities to address causes and identify solutions

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

- Materials developed will be posted on the Washington State CSHCN of the WA state DOH website following evaluation of proposed recommendations
- Recommendations and web links to resources will be provided to families and professionals providing care to CSHCN

FUTURE RESEARCH & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Pilot project to evaluate family perception and interpretation of preparedness recommendations for CSNN
- Evaluation (pre & post-tests) to determine effectiveness of proposed recommendations
- Consultation with health care providers to assist in skill building techniques and completion of proposed preparedness tasks
- Interdisciplinary approach to raising awareness of the need for disaster preparedness among families of CSNN