

September

Weekly Wellness Tips

Week 1

Are You Prepared for an Emergency?

Disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes can strike with little or no warning. Roads may become impassable, power could be out for days and emergency services might be overwhelmed. In these situations, having a plan can make all the difference between chaos and calm.

September is National Preparedness Month, so make a plan for if you need to evacuate your home or get trapped inside for days.

Preparedness isn't just about stocking up on supplies; it's about knowing what to do, where to go and how to stay safe. Consider these five key steps to help you and your household prepare:

- **Know your risks.** Understand the types of disasters most likely to affect your area. In the Midwest, tornadoes and floods are common. Coastal regions may face hurricanes, while the West Coast is more prone to earthquakes and wildfires.
- **Create a communication plan.** Make sure every member of your household knows how to reach each other during an emergency. Choose an out-of-town contact person and establish meeting points in case you're separated.
- **Assemble an emergency kit.** Your kit should include nonperishable food and water (enough for at least three days), flashlights and extra batteries, basic first-aid supplies, medications and personal hygiene items, important documents (e.g., IDs and insurance papers) in a waterproof container, and a battery-powered radio.
- **Plan for evacuation and shelter-in-place.** Know your local evacuation routes and shelters. Also, prepare for scenarios where you may need to stay inside your home for several days. Keep extra blankets, a manual can opener and entertainment for kids, if needed.
- **Include pets in your plan.** Don't forget your furry family members. Ensure you have food, water and any medications they need, and identify pet-friendly shelters in advance.

Visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (known as FEMA) website, [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov), to learn more about preparing for emergencies at home, at work and on the road.