

## What is Emergency Preparedness?

The term refers to the steps you take to make sure you are safe before, during and after an emergency or natural disaster. These plans are important for your safety in both natural disasters and man-made disasters. Examples of natural disasters are floods, blizzards, tornadoes, earthquakes, spread of disease and virus outbreaks. Man-made disasters can include explosions, fires, chemical and biological attacks.

5 mission areas of the Meigs County Health Department and all public health providers are Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, & Recovery. The role of public health providers is to promote, protect and improve the health of individuals and communities. After a major disaster, public health workers are often called upon to participate in a coordinated response to save lives & prevent unfavorable outcomes to vulnerable populations.

People with disabilities may be especially vulnerable during and after emergencies. In an emergency, many systems you rely on may not function as well as they usually do. Familiar landmarks and usual travel routes you and your service animal know may be altered. Utilities like electricity, water, gas and phone service may be disrupted. You might need to temporarily evacuate to a shelter which may not be fully accessible for your needs. The tips and strategies in this newsletter can help you plan to be prepared for these situations. Being prepared can **reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters**.

Disasters can strike at any moment, with little notice. In order to protect your home, family and don't forget your pets and animals, it is important to be prepared and have a plan in place. The family preparedness plan contains four steps that families should take to be ready for any disaster:

### Identify hazards

- Identify what types of disasters are most likely to happen in your area, and learn about how to prepare for each ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org) ).

### Hold a family meeting

- Meet with your family to discuss why it is important to be prepared.

## Prepare

Assemble a [disaster supply kit](#). After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days. Being prepared means having your own [food](#), [water](#) and other [supplies](#) to last for several days. A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.

## Practice your plan

- Practice your plan with your family on a regular basis (every six months).

Emergency Preparedness can be a large topic for discussion. This article just covers a few ideas on what you can do to get started. Go to [www.meigs-health.com](http://www.meigs-health.com) for information on the Meigs County Health Department Emergency Preparedness and Response Division. There is a lot of information, printable disaster supply kits and more ideas on the [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) site and the [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org) site.

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