

# BE RED CROSS READY

## ELDERS AND EMERGENCIES



**CANADIAN  
RED CROSS**

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Disasters can happen at any time, often without warning. Floods, forest fires, severe storms and other emergency situations can leave you and your family without electricity, and access to the supplies you need such as food, clean water, medication and personal care items. In a disaster, it could take emergency workers several days or more to clear the debris left on roads/rail lines and restore power and water service to the community.

## THERE ARE THREE STEPS RESIDENTS IN THE JAMES BAY AREA SHOULD TAKE TO PREPARE FOR AN EMERGENCY:

### STEP ONE: KNOW THE RISKS

Learn about the types of emergencies that can happen where you live, work and play.

### STEP TWO: MAKE A PLAN

Develop a communication plan in case you and your family are not all together when an emergency happens. Learn about what you need to do in the event you have to evacuate your home and/or you community.

### STEP THREE: GET YOUR KITS

Prepare a home emergency preparedness kit in the event an emergency confines you to your home for several days or more. Also prepare a “grab and go” bag that can be taken with you in the event you have to evacuate your home.

## STEP ONE

### KNOW THE RISKS



## STEP TWO

### MAKE A PLAN



## STEP THREE

### GET YOUR KITS



# PREPARING YOUR “GRAB AND GO” BAG

**YOU WILL BE BETTER ABLE TO DEAL WITH AN EMERGENCY IF YOU TAKE THE TIME TO PREPARE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY HAPPENS.**

Some disasters can create very unsafe conditions. If your safety is at risk, community officials may ask you to evacuate or leave your home. If asked to evacuate, you may have only minutes to get what you need and leave. Evacuations of remote northern First Nation communities often happen in the spring due to flooding and during the summer forest fire season. However, many other emergency situations can make an evacuation necessary. Preparing a “grab and go” bag before a disaster strikes will ensure that you and your family have everything that you need when you evacuate. These items need to be placed together in one bag. The following items should be in your “grab and go” bag:

- A copy of your family emergency plan
- Water (1 litre per person) \*Individuals with special medical needs or with young children may need to add additional water to their “grab and go” bags based on their personal needs (e.g., extra water for preparing baby formula or to take with medications, etc.)
- Food for 12-hour period (non-perishable ready-to-eat foods, high energy bars, meal replacement drinks, etc.)
- Crank or battery-operated flashlight, with extra batteries
- Photocopies of important documents (medical and vaccination records, health card, status card, birth certificate, prescriptions, insurance policies, bank account information, phone numbers of family members)
- Seasonal change of clothes (2-3 sets for each person in the family)
- House keys
- Cash (coins & bills)
- Basic first aid kit (one per family)
- Medication
- Personal items (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, deodorant, etc.)
- Paper and pen for writing
- Special needs items – canes, walkers, wheelchairs, blood sugar meter and insulin pen, glasses, hearing aids and extra batteries, etc. (NOTE: while these items would not be in a “grab and go” bag because they are used daily, keep them easily accessible and take them if you have to evacuate)



## NOTES:

- » The “grab and go” bag should be put together seasonally and according to each individual’s needs.
- » It is recommended that you never allow the amount of medication you have on hand to fall below a 10-day supply.
- » Leave a note on your “grab and go” bag that will remind you to bring any assistive devices, medical devices, medication or mobility devices that you do not normally keep in your “grab and go” bag. This will ensure you have what you need in an evacuation.
- » Aircraft used for evacuations have strict weight restrictions. Each family member’s “grab and go” bag must weigh 40 lbs or less (medical assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, are not part of this weight restriction).

## TYPE 2 DIABETICS - ITEMS YOU NEED TO ADD TO YOUR “GRAB AND GO” BAG

As a person with diabetes in a remote northern community, it is important to ensure you have prepared a “grab and go” bag with the essential items you need to stay healthy and safe should you have to evacuate. In addition to the items in a standard “grab and go” bag, the extra items you need to include in your “grab and go” bag are listed below. Leave a note on your “grab and go” bag that will remind you to bring any medical devices or medication that you do not normally keep in your “grab and go” bag. This will ensure you have what you need in an evacuation.

- Glucometer and test strips
- Treatment for low blood sugar (e.g. dextrose tablets, sugar packets, juice boxes)
- Diabetes medication
- Insulin pen and needles (if insulin-dependent)
- Sharps container (could be an empty plastic container with a screw top)
- Wool socks (to keep feet dry and warm)

## THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- » You cannot keep your insulin in your “grab and go” bag because it needs to be kept refrigerated at between 2-10 degrees Celsius. Depending on the time of year, you may need to keep your insulin in an insulated bag to prevent it from getting too warm or you may need to keep it in a thermos to keep it from freezing.
- » It is recommended that you never allow the amount of medication you have on hand to fall below a 10-day supply.
- » Blood sugar levels can change under stress so it is important to check your blood sugar if you feel tired, nauseous, have fruity breath, have stomach pain or are vomiting. If your blood sugar is higher than 14 you will need to follow your Sick Day Guidelines for diabetes. For more information, contact your local diabetes program.

## PREPARING YOUR HOME EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

In a remote northern community, it is very important to ensure that you are prepared to take care of yourself for a minimum of 7-10 days in the event of an emergency. If a major winter storm blocks road and rail service and travel outdoors is not possible, you could have to remain in your home for several days or longer. To ensure you are prepared to take care of yourself in an emergency situation like this, make sure that you have the following items in your home, stored together so they are easily located:

- Crank or battery-operated flashlight, with extra batteries
- Crank or battery-operated radio, with extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Extra keys, for house and car
- Cash (coins & bills)
- Food: Store at least a 7-10 day supply of non-perishable food for each person in your emergency preparedness kit. Non-perishable food items include dried fruit, canned stew/pasta/fish/vegetables, evaporated milk, instant oatmeal, meal replacement drinks, protein bars and granola bars. It is best to select foods that are compact, easy to prepare and require no refrigeration, cooking or added water. Once per year, check the expiration dates of your food items. Ensure that there is enough for each member of your family. Be sure to have a manual can opener in your kit.
- Water: During an emergency, tap water can become polluted or the supply may be cut off. Listen to public announcements about treating the water in your area after a disaster. A one-week supply of water should be included in your emergency preparedness kit for your family and any pets. It is recommended you store two litres of drinking water and two litres of water for washing per person, per day. Once per year, make use of your water supply and add fresh water to your kit.
- Special needs items - medications, insulin testing kit and testing supplies, glasses, hearing aids and batteries, etc.
- Copy of your family emergency plan
- Copies of important documents for each member of your family (medical and vaccination records, health card, status card, birth certificate, prescriptions, insurance policies, bank account information, family contact information)
- Toilet paper and other personal items (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, deodorant, etc.)
- Extra blanket(s)
- Seasonally appropriate outerwear items (rubber boots in spring, snowshoes in winter, etc.)
- Waterproof matches
- Lantern and fuel (store fuel outside, away from a heat source)
- Bush cooking stove for cooking outside and fuel (store fuel outside, away from a heat source)
- Whistle
- Playing cards or board games



## TYPE 2 DIABETICS - ITEMS YOU NEED TO ADD TO YOUR HOME EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

As a person with diabetes in a remote northern community, it is important to ensure you have prepared a home emergency preparedness kit with the essential items you need to stay healthy and safe in the event an emergency situation confines you to your home for several days. The extra items you need to include in your home emergency preparedness kit are listed below.

- Glucometer and test strips
- Treatment for low blood sugar (e.g. dextrose tablets, sugar packets, juice boxes)
- Diabetes medication
- Insulin pen and needles (if insulin-dependent)
- Sharps container (could be an empty plastic container with a screw top)
- Wool socks (to keep feet dry and warm)

### THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- » You cannot keep insulin in your home emergency preparedness kit because it needs to be kept refrigerated at between 2-10 degrees Celsius. In a power outage, you may need to keep your insulin in an insulated bag to prevent it from getting too warm or you may need to keep it in a thermos to keep it from freezing.
- » It is recommended that you never allow the amount of medication you have on hand to fall below a 10-day supply.
- » Blood sugar levels can change under stress so it is important to check your blood sugar if you feel tired, nauseous, have fruity breath, have stomach pain or are vomiting. If your blood sugar is higher than 14 you will need to follow your Sick Day Guidelines for diabetes. For more information, contact your local diabetes program.

## ELDERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

Everyone needs to prepare for emergencies, especially those with special needs.

If you require medication, have a medical condition, use a mobility device like a walker, or have an assistive device like a hearing aid or reading glasses, you need to take this into consideration when planning for emergencies and preparing your emergency kits.



### MEDICATION

If you require medication, never allow the amount you have to fall below a 10-day supply. Make sure you keep a copy of any current prescriptions you have in your “grab and go” bag. Record on paper the name and telephone number of any doctors you see. Also write down the times you normally take your medication and the dosages for each medication. Keep this information in your “grab and go” bag as well.



### MEDICAL CONDITION

If you have a medical condition (such as diabetes, epilepsy, angina, etc.), make sure that you have taken this into account when preparing your home emergency preparedness kit and your “grab and go” bag. In addition to ensuring you have the medication you require, make sure you include any medical devices you need (insulin testing kit, test strips, etc.). Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your medical condition in case of emergency. This could save your life if you are in need of medical attention and are unable to communicate.



### MOBILITY DEVICES

If you use a mobility device such as a walker, cane or wheelchair, you will want to make sure you bring this with you if an emergency requires you to evacuate your home. Mobility devices are to be brought with you if you have to evacuate to a location in the community or if you have to evacuate by air to another community. The weight limits set for baggage on aircraft used for air evacuations do not include the weight of your mobility device.



### ASSISTIVE DEVICES

If you use an assistive device such as hearing aids or reading glasses, don't forget to make sure you bring these with you if you need to evacuate your home in an emergency. If you use hearing aids, keep extra batteries for these in your “grab and go” bag.

Being prepared for emergencies is everyone's responsibility. You will be better able to cope with an emergency if you take the time to prepare before an emergency happens.



**CANADIAN  
RED CROSS**

**TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP MAKE THE JAMES BAY AREA  
BETTER PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES!**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO BE RED CROSS  
READY AND TO ACCESS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP  
YOU PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES, PLEASE VISIT:**

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