

# Public Health, Epidemiology and Prevention

# PEP Talk



## Hurricane Season is Here

# Get a Plan!

### Hurricanes and tropical storms – get ready now!

Living in Florida means that we all need to understand and get ready for hurricanes. You cannot stop a hurricane, but you can take steps to protect yourself, your family and your home from the dangers of these powerful storms.

Most disasters happen with little or no warning. Hurricanes are different. Thanks to modern weather forecasting, most of the time you know when a hurricane is getting near our area. This gives you time to prepare. Make sure your plan is ready before hurricane season starts. **Be ready before a storm gets here.**

Hurricane season starts on June 1 and ends on November 30, with the peak of the season from mid-August to late October. Your planning should take place before hurricane season begins. **There's no time like NOW to get started!** It takes time to make a good plan, but once you've done it you will only need minor updates each year.

### Preparing for a Hurricane

Here are some basic steps to take to prepare for hurricane season:

- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes and locations of emergency shelters.
- Prepare a family disaster plan and a family disaster supplies kit.
- Visit [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org) for helpful checklists for planning and preparedness

### Help Your Children Prepare

Children's fears are very real. They can stem from their active imaginations. You should take this seriously. Your words and actions can reassure a child who feels afraid.

When talking to your children before or after a hurricane or other disaster, be sure to tell them the truth. Children know, hear and see more than we may know.

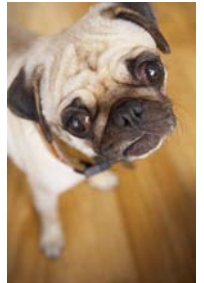


Be sure that children know that while you are preparing for the worst, you are hoping for, and expecting, the best. As part of your family disaster planning, get your children involved in assembling their own disaster supplies kit:

- A few favorite books, crayons and paper
- Puzzles, a board game, deck of cards
- A couple of favorite small toys
- Favorite blanket, pillow
- Pictures of family and pets
- Other items that will bring comfort

### Prepare an Emergency Kit for Your Pet (s).

- It should include food, water, leash, collar and identification.
- Never** leave your pets alone in the house if you must evacuate!
- Make plans in advance to take your pets with you or to leave them with a friend or family member who does not live in an evacuation area.



### Prepare Your Home for a Storm

- Identify potential hazards in your home and know how to secure or protect them before the hurricane strikes.
- Be prepared to turn off electrical power if there is standing water or fallen power lines.
- Buy a fire extinguisher and make sure your family knows how to use it.
- Locate and secure your important papers, such as insurance policies, wills, bank info, etc.
- Post emergency phone numbers at every phone and program numbers into cell phones.



Now is the time to get ready. Advance planning - with the whole family involved - will make it easier for your family to respond if a tropical storm or hurricane approaches our area. For more information, visit [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org), [www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0\\_500\\_,00.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0_500_,00.html) or [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

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# *June is Home Safety Month*

## Hands-On for Home Safety

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### Summertime Safety

Summer marks the time for families to enjoy some of America's most traditional pastimes – barbecues, pool parties and backyard gatherings. However, family fun could be interrupted by a trip to the emergency room if you don't follow simple steps to stay safe.

Kids and their friends are home more during the summer, so you want to make sure that your home is prepared for more activity and guests. By being alert and prepared for summertime threats, families are reducing their chances of injuries for their loved ones. The Pinellas County Health Department recommends that you follow these guidelines to keep your family safe this summer.

### Grilling Safety

Gas and charcoal grills caused an average of 1,500 structure fires and 4,800 outdoor fires in or on home properties in the U.S.

last year. **Here are some safety tips to make sure your next barbecue doesn't go up in flames:**

- Designate the grilling area a “*No Play Zone*,” keeping kids and pets far away until grill equipment is completely cool.
- Before using, put your grill at least three feet away from other objects, including your house and any shrubs or bushes.
- Only use starter fluid made for barbecue grills when starting a fire in a charcoal grill. Never use gasoline!
- Before using a gas grill, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line to be sure it is working properly and is not leaking.
- Never use a match to check for leaks. If you detect a leak, immediately turn off the fuel and don't attempt to light the grill again until the leak is fixed.
- Never use a barbecue grill indoors or in any unventilated space. This is both a fire and carbon monoxide poisoning hazard. Carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to death!



### Backyard Safety

Lawn mowing and landscaping top the list of chores when it comes to preparing for backyard parties and barbecues. The simple act of yard work can have lots of chance to get hurt if you're not careful. **Here are some tips to make sure your backyard doesn't become an injury trap:**

- Wear protective goggles and ear protection while using outdoor machinery to prevent sight and hearing-loss injuries.
- Keep all garden equipment and tools where children cannot reach them.
- Store all sharp tools pointing downward.
- Use gasoline only as a fuel for motors.
- Store gasoline in a container designed just for gasoline in a shed or garage with a lock.
- Gasoline must never be used indoors, even in small amounts.
- Use gasoline outdoors only. The vapors (fumes) are very dangerous if you bring gasoline inside a building.
- Fill mowers and gas-powered tools outside, before starting the job. Re-fuel only after the engine has completely cooled.
- Start mowers outdoors to avoid raising carbon monoxide levels inside your garage.
- Chemicals and fuels (such as gasoline), car fluids (such as anti-freeze), pesticides (such as bug killers) and lawn and garden products (such as fertilizer) are poison. Store them where children cannot see or touch them.
- Close the lid on all dangerous products and put them away after using them. Store them in a safe place with a lock.
- Clear sidewalks and pathways of any toys and clutter to avoid slips and falls.
- Cover the ground under playground equipment with a thick layer (9 to 12 inches) of mulch, wood chips or other safety material.



**For additional information to help you learn more and stay safe in and around your home, please visit [www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org).**