

# ARE YOU STORM READY?

## GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Hunkering down for a hurricane may be different this year because of COVID-19. Give yourself more time than usual to prepare emergency food, water and medicine supplies. Make sure you have enough clean face coverings or masks for each person in the household for the next few days.
- Wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart from people outside your household, and wash/disinfect your hands regularly.
- Check on neighbors and friends by phone or in person from a safe distance.
- Avoid floodwaters, both driving and walking through them, especially on highways and roads.
- Visit the LDH Emergency Preparedness webpage for COVID-19 testing updates.
- For the latest weather updates, monitor your local news outlets, or @LaDeptHealth on Twitter and Facebook.
- If you have questions or concerns, please call 2-1-1.

## PREPARE TO EVACUATE

- Some of you may be reluctant to evacuate should the storms demand that out of COVID concerns. But now that the threat has increased, it is very important to listen to officials if they direct you to evacuate. There are ways to evacuate safely.
- If you may need to evacuate, prepare a "go kit" with personal items you cannot do without during an emergency. Include items that can help protect you and others from COVID-19, such as hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, bar or liquid soap, disinfectant wipes (if available) and 2 masks for each person.
- Masks should not be used by children under the age of 2. They also should not be used by people having trouble breathing, or who are unconscious, incapacitated or unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Know a safe place to shelter and have several ways to receive weather alerts, such as National Weather Service (<https://www.weather.gov/lix>). Follow your local news.
- Find out if your local public shelter is open, in case you need to evacuate your home and go there. Your shelter location may be different this year due to the pandemic.

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## STAYING WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY

- Consider whether where you're staying has someone who is at higher risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19, including older adults or people of any age who have underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension or cardiac disease. If so, it is important to wear masks and keep distance where possible.
- Follow everyday preventive actions, including covering coughs and sneezes, washing your hands often, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Consider extra precautions for people living in close quarters.
  - If your household includes one or more vulnerable people then all household members should behave as if they themselves are at higher risk.
  - Vulnerable members should avoid caring for children and those who are sick.
  - Separate a household member who is sick.
- Know what to do if someone in your family or in the household you are staying with becomes sick with COVID-19, such as creating a sick room or at least distance where possible between the sick person and others. Take steps to keep your pets safe.

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Dealing with disasters can cause stress and strong emotions, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is natural to feel anxiety, grief, and worry. Coping with these feelings and getting help when you need it will help you, your family and your community recover. You can call our special Keep Calm through COVID hotline. This connects you to trained, compassionate counselors who can offer support and who can direct you to mental health and substance abuse counseling services. Call 1-866-310-7977.
- The Behavioral Health Recovery Outreach Line connects individuals to real-time support to avoid, prevent or intercept a crisis from occurring. This line offers recovery support 24/7/365 for those with substance use, mental health, mental illness or co-occurring disorders. However, those with no prior history of substance use or mental illness can access these services any day, any time. Call 1-833-333-1132 to speak with a qualified support provider who can connect you to trained specialists and clinicians in multiple languages.
- People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.
- Telehealth allowances are still ongoing to provide flexibility in obtaining services.
- For advice on healthy and positive family interactions and coping during these unique times, read Parenting in a Pandemic: Tips to Keep the Calm at Home from the American Academy of Pediatrics. You can access this article here: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Parenting-in-a-Pandemic.aspx>