



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST



for People  
with  
Thalassemia



## Why Do People with Thalassemia Need an Emergency Preparedness Checklist?

Emergencies and natural disasters are thankfully rare, but they do happen. It's important that all families develop a plan of action to use in the event of an emergency situation. Because it is possible you may not be together with your family members at a time of an emergency or natural disaster, it is vital to have an emergency plan before disaster strikes. Such a plan can help ensure you will have access to a transfusion or other thalassemia-related care even in an emergency situation.

Once you have developed your plan, make sure that you discuss it with your family and medical team, and practice it with your family.

### Things to Think About

Here are some general questions to consider as you develop your family's plan:



- What situations might you and your family face where you live? For example, do you reside in a flood zone, near a faultline, in a tornado-prone area? Do you live in a major urban area or a remote rural area?
- How will you evacuate or escape your home if you need to?
- What route will you take out of your neighborhood if you need to leave? Do you have an alternate route?
- Where will you meet your family members if you are not together at home during an evacuation?

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- What supplies will you and your family need to shelter in place? (“Shelter in place” means staying where you are and taking shelter rather than trying to evacuate.)
- Does your community have emergency warning signals (such as horns, sirens, etc.)?
- What emergency services does your community provide? Does your community have emergency shelter sites?
- Have you contacted local organizations (such as your local emergency department, United Way, Red Cross) to let them know that someone in your family has special needs in the event of an emergency?
- Do you have an emergency contact person who lives out of the area, in the event that you must evacuate out of your area? Do you, your family members and healthcare team members have that person’s telephone number?
- Have you discussed emergency plans with your primary healthcare providers or your thalassemia treatment center?
- Do you know of an alternate hospital at which you can get a transfusion if your regular hospital is unable to treat you?
- If you are receiving medication through a closed pharmacy system, do you know if it has an emergency supply plan?



*“Shelter in place” means staying where you are rather than evacuating.*

By thinking about these types of questions, you will be ready to prepare an emergency plan for you and your family.

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### General Tips for People with Thalassemia

If you or a family member has thalassemia, here are some things to help you best manage your care during a state of emergency:

- Keep a medical “go-bag” or small suitcase of chelators, medications, and supplies packed at all times so that it is easy to grab and go. Keep as many chelating supplies on hand as your insurance will allow and be sure to change out supplies regularly so they can be used before they expire.



*Keep your “go-bag” stocked and ready*

- Also include in your go-bag:
  - the contact information for your hematologist or healthcare provider,
  - a basic description of thalassemia and its treatment,
  - information on how often you are transfused,
  - what type of chelation therapy is prescribed and how often it is prescribed,
  - any information on complications (such as diabetes, cardiac dysfunction) as well as any treatments prescribed for these complications,
  - a record of your transfusion history with information on antibody reactions and special instructions for type and cross, and

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- a family manual or notebook containing:
  - current medical information,
  - instructions on preparing and administering chelators and other medicines,
  - directions to the thalassemia treatment center or hospital,
  - important telephone numbers, and
  - diagnosis and treatment information.
- Consider wearing a medical alert bracelet with your hematologist's name and contact information, as well as other information that your hematologist recommends.
- Program your emergency contact information into your telephone under "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) so that emergency medical service responders can find the number in the event of an emergency.



*Program emergency contact info under "ICE" in your cell phone*

## Materials and Supplies

A large part of your emergency preparedness plan will focus on making sure you have the supplies and materials that will help you in an emergency. Suggested materials and supplies are included in the next sections. You may want to pack another "go bag," separate from the one with your essential medical supplies, for these items.

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## First aid/medical supplies

- Two pairs of latex or other sterile gloves.
- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding.
- Thermometer.
- Antibiotic ointment and burn ointment to prevent infection.
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes.
- Cleansing agents or soap and antibiotic towelettes.
- Prescription medications and supplies.
- Nonprescription drugs and personal hygiene items.
- A cooler for insulin or other medical supplies that must be kept at a cool temperature.



*Make sure you have both prescription and non-prescription medications on hand*

## General Supplies

- Flashlights with extra batteries.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Battery-powered radios with extra batteries or a hand crank-powered radio.
- A portable water filtration system (usually obtained from a camping/outdoor store).
- Universal, wind-up or solar-powered cell phone charger.



*Get a hand-cranked radio or a battery-powered radio with extra batteries*

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- Landline phone.
- Dust masks and work gloves.
- A wrench or pliers to turn off utilities (such as water or gas).
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape for sheltering in place.

### Food and Water

- 3-day supply of water (1 gallon per person per day).
- 3-day supply of canned foods and pasteurized milk.
- High-energy foods like peanut butter, nuts, dry cereal, granola, and crackers.
- A manual can opener.
- Paper plates and plastic forks, spoons, and knives.



### Clothing

Whether sheltering in place or evacuating, have on hand one complete change of warm clothing and shoes per person, including:

- A jacket or coat,
- Long pants (waterproofed, if possible),
- A long-sleeved shirt,

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- Sturdy shoes, preferably waterproof.
- A hat and gloves, and
- A sleeping bag or warm blanket.

### Money and Documents

- Emergency cash in small bills, (ones, fives, and tens) in your home.
- Important identification information (copies of social security cards, birth certificates, drivers' licenses) in one central place in a waterproof container (preferably in your go-bag).
- Financial information (insurance policies, bank account information) in one easy-to-get-to place.
- Carry up-to-date personal information, including medical information for each family member, with you.



*Make sure you have important documents like birth certificates and insurance policies*

### Other Items

The following items can also be useful in an emergency:

- Emergency reference materials, such as a first-aid book.
- A generator (and fuel for it).
- Rain gear.

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- A fire extinguisher.
- A tent.
- Signal flares.
- Paper and pencils.
- Paper towels.
- Household chlorine bleach, which you can use as a disinfectant to clean surfaces (mix nine parts water to one part bleach). In an emergency, you also can use it to purify water. (Use 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water.) Do not use scented or color-safe bleach or bleach with added cleaners.



## Vehicle Readiness

If your car or truck is ready to travel, it will make your evacuation easier.

- Make sure you have enough fuel in your vehicle before you have to evacuate.
- Always carry a first-aid kit, blankets and other roadside emergency supplies.
- Make sure child car seats are properly installed.



*Carry a first-aid kit with you and make sure you have fuel in your vehicle*



## Emergency Preparedness Checklist for People with Thalassemia

### **Your Preparedness Plan Is Important**

Using the information in the booklet, you can create a plan that works best for you and your family. Once you have developed your plan, make sure that you go over it and practice it with your family.

Emergency situations can be challenging and stressful. Having a good plan in place will help to ensure that you and your family can make the best of a difficult situation.



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## About This Publication

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For more information about thalassemia:

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**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/thalassemia](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/thalassemia)

For more information about emergency preparedness:

<http://emergency.cdc.gov>

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