Intermountain® Healthcare

Diabetes: Preparing for an emergency

Why prepare?

We never know when an emergency will happen. During an emergency, it may be 72 hours (3 days) before you and your family can go home, are moved to a temporary shelter, or have the power and water turned back on.

During those 72 hours, you will need to have food, water, shelter, and extra medicine. **Medical care or access to a pharmacy may not be possible.** For these reasons, you or your child need to be prepared for diabetes care. The best way to do this is to have a diabetes 72-hour kit ready to go.

How do I keep my emergency insulin safe?

Keep unopened vials of insulin in the refrigerator until needed. Once opened, the insulin can be used for 28 days—even if left at room temperature, which is 56° to 86° F (13° to 30° C). Insulin will go bad if it gets too hot or too cold.

What should be in my diabetes 72-hour kit?

- ☐ **Make a list of all of your medical conditions and the medicines used to treat them.** Include the phone number of your diabetes clinic or care manager and your healthcare provider.
- ☐ **Keep an insulated pouch or cooler and an ice pack handy to store your insulin.** (Keep insulin in the refrigerator and the ice in the freezer until you need it. Don't put insulin next to the ice pack in the cooler. It will go bad if it gets too cold.)
- ☐ **Gather enough supplies for 72 hours.** Include the following:
  - ☐ Glucometer and strips
  - ☐ Glucose control medicines, such as metformin and insulin
  - ☐ Syringes, lancets, pen needles, and alcohol wipes (if needed). Include a hard plastic container to hold your used syringes, needles, and lancets.
  - ☐ Urine ketone strips
  - ☐ Your source of emergency glucagon
  - ☐ Extra supplies, charging cables, and battery packs for your insulin pump and/or CGM, if you use one
  - ☐ Fast-acting carbohydrates for 72-hours (such as fruit snacks, lifesavers or other hard candy, or glucose tablets or gel)
  - ☐ Snacks that include protein to help sustain blood glucose, such as nuts, jerky, protein bars or shakes

Put all of these supplies (except the insulin) in a waterproof carrying case. Put it in a location that will be easy to reach if you are in a hurry. Be sure to put a full water bottle, the chilled insulin, cooling case, and ice pack (if you have one) in your carrying case before you leave. **Water is one of the most important emergency supplies to have on hand.** Put a date on the calendar to update your kit each year to make sure nothing is expired.

Notes

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