

ARE YOU READY?



Get Ready

AN INITIATIVE OF THE
AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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Tornado preparedness for pregnant women and families with infants



Tornadoes can strike with little or no warning. They can be stressful for pregnant women and those caring for infants. Preparing ahead of time for a tornado can help keep you and your loved ones safe.

Before a tornado

- Learn about your community's tornado warning system. If you have children, find out about their day care or school tornado plan.
- Choose a room where your family and pets can stay safe during a tornado. The ideal room is in a basement or underground shelter. If those are not available, choose a room in the middle of your home with no windows. Create and practice a household tornado drill so that everyone knows where to go and what to do.
- During storms, use a battery-operated radio to listen to weather updates and instructions from local officials.
- Be aware of tornado warning signs:
 - dark, greenish skies
 - a large, dark, low-lying cloud
 - a loud roar
 - large hail
 - a visible, rotating funnel

Plan your emergency supplies

Put together an emergency kit for your family, including supplies such as flashlights, batteries, a first-aid kit, food and water.



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If you are pregnant, your kit should also have:

- nutritious foods, such as protein bars, nuts, dried fruit and granola
- prenatal medical records
- maternity and baby clothes
- prenatal vitamins and other medications
- extra bottled water
- emergency birth supplies, such as clean towels, sharp scissors, infant bulb syringe, sterile gloves, two white shoelaces, sheets and sanitary pads
- two blankets
- closed-toe shoes

If you have an infant, your kit should also have:

- a thermometer
- extra baby clothes and shoes for older infant
- copies of vaccination records
- ready-to-feed formula that does not need water, to last seven days
- antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer
- baby sling or carrier
- dish soap
- diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream to last seven days
- a portable crib
- medications and infant liquid pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen
- baby food in pouches or jars to last seven days, and feeding spoons
- bottles
- two baby blankets

During and after a tornado

If you are inside when a tornado occurs, go as quickly as possible to the shelter area, making sure to stay away from windows. If you are away from home, such as at work, let officials know that you are pregnant or have an infant with you.



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Once the tornado has passed, there will be a period of cleanup. During this time, watch out for broken debris, fallen electrical wires and damaged gas lines. Make sure to wash or sanitize your hands as often as possible. Check yourself and your children for any injuries. If you are worried about your or your baby's health, contact your health care provider or emergency shelter staff immediately.

If you have an infant, breastfeeding is the best food for your baby after a tornado. It is naturally clean, helps protect your infant from illnesses and can provide comfort to both you and your baby. Continuing to breastfeed after a tornado will help keep up your milk supply.

If you are feeding your baby infant formula, ready-to-feed formula is recommended because no water is needed to prepare it. If it is not possible to use ready-to-feed formula, use bottled water to prepare the powdered or concentrated formula during and after a tornado, as water supplies may be

contaminated. If bottled water is unavailable, use boiled water. When preparing formula with boiled water, let the formula cool before giving it to your baby. Always clean all bottles and nipples before each use. Wash or sanitize your hands before preparing formula. If you are breastfeeding, you should think about getting some ready-to-feed formula in case the emergency affects your milk supply or makes it so you cannot breastfeed.

Being pregnant during and after a tornado can be a stressful time and hard on your body. Rest as much as you can, drink plenty of clean water and eat several times during the day. It is important to go for your regular prenatal care visits as soon as you are out of immediate danger. If you cannot reach your regular health care provider, ask at the emergency shelter or local hospital where you can go to receive care.

Know the signs of preterm labor

Preterm labor – which is labor that begins before 37 weeks of pregnancy – may occur in some pregnant women after a disaster. If you have any signs of preterm labor, call your health care provider, go to the hospital or tell the person in charge of the emergency shelter right away:

- contractions that make your belly tighten up like a fist every 10 minutes or more often
- change in the color of your vaginal discharge, or bleeding from your vagina
- the feeling that your baby is pushing down, called pelvic pressure
- low, dull backache
- cramps that feel like your period
- belly cramps with or without diarrhea



For more information on healthy pregnancies and babies, visit marchofdimes.org