

Are you prepared for an emergency?



The persons whose photographs are depicted in the slides are professional models. They have no relation to the issues discussed. Any characters they are portraying are fictional.

This presentation gives basic advice about family emergency preparedness, not expert advice. For specific information about emergency situations, consult with local, state or federal officials or your health-care provider.

This self-study module meets the Stanislaus County Medical Reserve Corps training requirements for personal preparedness. There is a ten question quiz that needs to be submitted via the link indicated at the end of this module to ensure training credit is recognized. This module can be completed within 20-30 minutes.

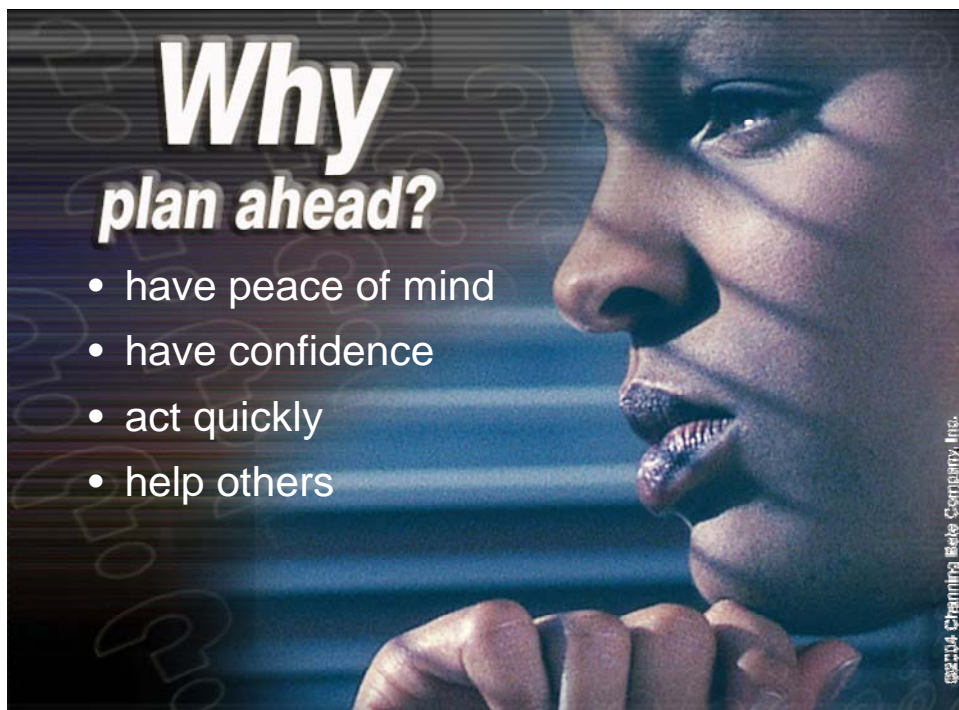


Emergencies are rare, but they are still a fact of life. If we looked back through history, we'd see that having to cope with emergencies is nothing new. But being aware that emergencies are possible doesn't mean we should stop going about our daily routines or enjoying our lives. It's cause for preparation, not panic. Being prepared for an emergency—whether from terrorism or a natural disaster—simply makes sense.

Educating ourselves, being aware and being prepared can help reduce the stress and anxiety that can come from living in uncertain times. Local, state, national and other agencies are working to protect our communities and to educate the public about ways to be prepared. But all capable citizens have a responsibility to stay aware of their surroundings and to be ready in the event of an emergency. Being prepared can help us to stay calm, think and then act, so that we take the safest possible steps as quickly as we can. When we all do our part, we can help ourselves, our families, our neighbors and our communities if an emergency occurs.



Emergency preparedness means being prepared for all types of emergencies that you could face—a fire or flood, a chemical spill, terrorism, or any event that puts lives and property at risk. It's important to take specific steps for the types of emergencies you are most likely to face. But the good news is that much of what you do to prepare will help in any emergency.



Why plan ahead?

- have peace of mind
- have confidence
- act quickly
- help others

Being prepared can actually reduce worry, because everyone knows they are ready if an emergency should ever occur. Being prepared can help you and your family react with confidence, not panic. Everyone will be safer as a result. Emergencies can require fast action, with not much time to gather supplies and make other plans. Family members, neighbors or pets may need to rely on your help. Being prepared can make all the difference.

You may need to act quickly.

- evacuate
- “shelter-in-place”



The time you have to respond to an emergency may not be enough for stopping to think about supplies you need and then gathering or buying them. You may need to move to safety fast. Depending on the type of emergency, local or other authorities may instruct you to:

EVACUATE

Evacuations may be needed for many different types of emergencies. Depending on the emergency, you might have a day or two to prepare, or not much time at all.

SHELTER IN PLACE

Sheltering-in-place means staying where you are—in your home, at your place of employment or in another location—when an emergency occurs. This might be for a short time or for several days or more (and could include being without power after a winter storm for example). Being able to act quickly is why being prepared is so important. And because you're prepared, you can stay calm and help others stay calm too.

Assessing risks

- types
- special steps
- receiving instructions



Although your planning will generally be the same for all types of emergencies, you can plan most completely by assessing your risks. This involves determining:

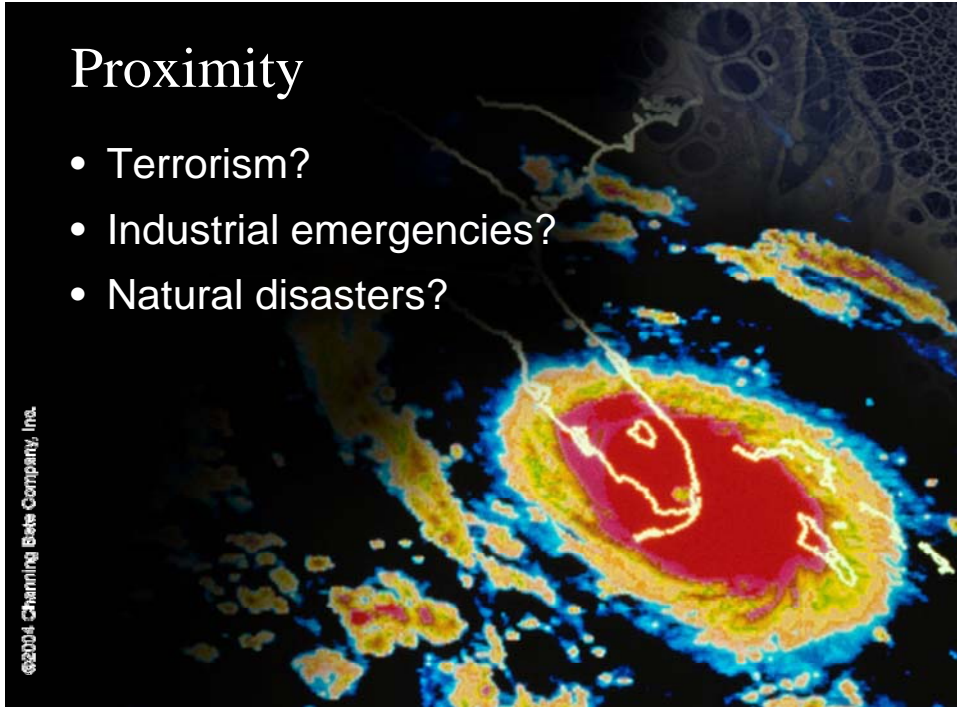
- Which risks you are most likely to face
- Any special steps you need to take to prepare for each one
- How you will receive instructions during an emergency.

You may already be aware of some of this information. But to be sure you're as informed as possible, contact your local emergency management office, other local authorities (such as law enforcement, the fire department or public health department) or your local American Red Cross Chapter.

Proximity

- Terrorism?
- Industrial emergencies?
- Natural disasters?

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In assessing your risks, think about the area or areas where you live and work, and where children go to school. How likely are those areas to face terrorism, industrial emergencies or natural disasters? As you assess each of these risks, also think about places where you and your family travel—for work, for vacation or to visit relatives, for example.

The foundation: a family disaster plan

- communication
- home preparedness
- disaster kit
- special needs
- first aid

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Once you've assessed your risks, you can make a family disaster plan that will cover the emergencies you're most likely to face. This is a critical step in being prepared. In this section we'll be discussing:

- Communication has two key parts: 1) involving everyone during the planning process, and 2) planning how to contact each other if you are separated during an emergency.
- Preparing your home can help you respond quickly to any emergency, whether you are leaving or sheltering-in-place.
- Making a disaster kit ensures that you'll have needed supplies ready so that you can leave quickly or take shelter at home, if either response is required.
- Along with planning for everyone's basic needs, you'll need to think about any special needs, such as medications, that you or others in your plan may have.
- Getting properly trained and certified in first aid and CPR is always a good idea. Having a first-aid kit is an essential part of being prepared.

Once your plan is in place, review it together regularly, such as every 6 months.

Communication

- household members
- neighbors



As mentioned earlier, it's important to communicate first with local authorities, as part of your risk assessment. Once you have received information from local authorities, it's important to involve everyone in the planning discussions.

Talk with all household members about the need to be prepared for the different types of emergencies you could face. Talk about ways you would respond. Involve each person in making your plan. Be sure to include children in age-appropriate ways.

Think about creating a network of neighbors, too.

- Talk about what role each could play in an emergency (for example, if someone has an electrical generator or medical knowledge).
- Plan who will help specific neighbors who might need assistance (such as a single parent or a person who doesn't drive).
- Agree on where children can go if parents can't get home right away.

Stay in contact.

- meeting places
- contact person
- supplies and information

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In the event that people are separated when an emergency occurs, knowing where everyone will meet is key:

- Pick one place near your home.
- Pick a second place outside your neighborhood, in case people cannot meet near home. You may want to pick more than one place, in case any routes are blocked. Agree on places that are familiar to everyone (such as a store, movie theater or school). Be sure everyone knows the address and phone number of each place.

Your contact person should be a trusted friend or relative outside your area, preferably out of state, in case local phone service is interrupted. Everyone should have the contact's home phone number, as well as a work number, cell phone number and email address, if the person has these.

Be sure all household members have what they need to stay in contact, such as a prepaid calling card, change for phone calls, or possibly a cell phone (kept charged at all times), as well as addresses and phone numbers. Remind people that phone systems may be very busy or down, so to keep trying and follow the plan as best they can. Keep in mind also that cordless phones will not work if power is out, so have at least one hardwired phone in your home.

Prepare your home.

- “safe room”
- needed materials



Having your home prepared for an emergency will be critical if local authorities instruct you to shelter-in-place.

Know what the safe spots are in your home for the kinds of emergencies you might face. Depending on the emergency, this might include an interior room above ground level with as few doors and windows as possible (for a chemical release, for example).

Keep plastic sheeting or heavyweight garbage bags, duct tape and scissors with your disaster kit, in case you need to seal a room to create a barrier from hazardous materials in the air. Consider precutting and labeling the sheets so you can quickly seal windows, doors and air vents.

Take other home safety steps.

- fire and carbon monoxide (CO) safety
- utilities
- exit routes
- emergency numbers



Home fires and other problems may happen during a disaster, but can also happen on their own. So preparing your home also involves considering:

- Maintain working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. (Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas produced by incomplete burning of fuel—some common causes of carbon monoxide poisoning are an improperly vented heating system and a car running in a garage.) Hold regular drills. Be sure to pick a meeting place outside your home.
- Teach every responsible household member how and when to turn off electricity, water and gas. (It's best to follow instructions of local authorities, but in some cases action may be needed more quickly.) **DO NOT PRACTICE TURNING OFF GAS**—a gas company official must turn it back on.
- Draw a floor plan of your home. Be sure everyone knows at least two ways out of every room if possible.
- Post emergency and other important contact numbers by each phone.

You should also make sure your home is easy for emergency personnel to find. It should have a large, well-lighted street number.

Keep records and money ready.

- Include all important records.
- Make copies.
- Have some money stored.



Another step you can take to have your home ready for an emergency is to organize your records and emergency money.

- Use a waterproof, fireproof container that you can carry to store legal documents, health records, insurance forms, financial records and a list of valuables (with photographs of these). Review insurance policies to ensure they provide enough coverage.
- Make two copies of records. Store originals in a safe-deposit box. Store one set in your container and one set with your out-of-town contact (so you need to be sure this person can be trusted with your personal information).
- In an emergency, banks or routes to them may be closed, cash machines may not be working, or you may not have time to get money. So be sure to keep a small amount of money in cash or traveler's checks (and possibly a credit card and extra checkbook) in your disaster kit or in another safe place at home for quick access. Also consider having a separate emergency account. You may also want to keep an extra set of car keys with your emergency money.

It's important to remember that common sense and personal safety come first in any emergency. Delay leaving home to gather belongings only if it's safe to do so.

Create a disaster kit.

- Use easy-to-carry containers.
- Plan for at least 3 days.
- Make sure everyone knows where it's kept.

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Having a disaster kit prepared will allow you to evacuate fast, if you need to, or to quickly get to a safe room, if the situation calls for that. As you create your kit, keep these general points in mind:

- Try to store everything you can in one or two containers, such as small unused garbage cans, camping backpacks or duffel bags. Keep items in airtight plastic bags.
- The supplies in the kit should provide for everyone's basic needs for at least three days.
- Anyone at home at the time may need to grab the kit and go quickly.

You should be able to take your three day kit with you quickly in case of an evacuation. It's important to keep in mind that shelters may only provide some, but not all, supplies.

In the event that you are confined to your home for a longer period, several sources suggest expanding your kit to last longer, such as five to seven days. FEMA advises expanding supplies to last up to two weeks even though it's unlikely that food supplies would be cut off for that long.

Disaster kit basics

- food & water
- clothing & bedding
- tools & equipment
- hygiene & first-aid supplies
- other items



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Plan to stock nonperishables, such as canned foods that need no cooking, refrigeration or preparation. Store at least one gallon of water per person per day. Every six months (or by the expiration date), use and replace what you have stored.

Each household member should ideally have a full change of clothes and sturdy shoes, extra underwear, needed weather gear, a blanket or sleeping bag, and a pillow. (If space is tight, consider packing a backpack for each person with these items in it.)

You'll need a range of tools and equipment, including a portable, battery-powered radio or TV, flashlights and a manual can opener.

Be sure to pack common hygiene items. You or others may have special needs. Some other possible items to include are pens and paper, books, games and toys.

Plan for special needs.

- infants
- older adults
- people with disabilities
- pets

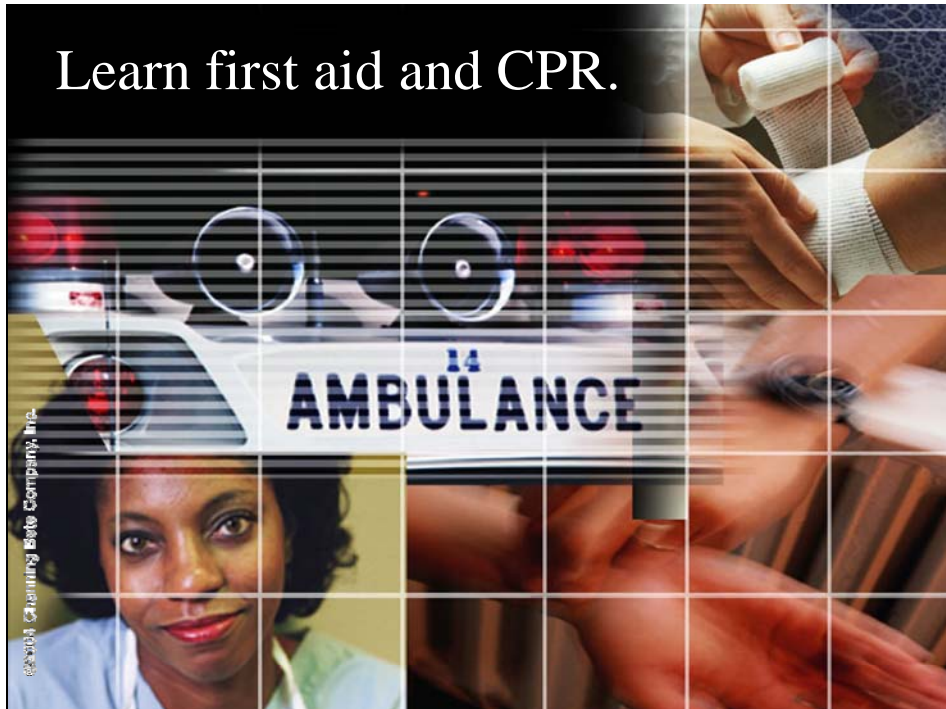
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A disaster plan also includes planning for any special needs that you or other household members have, and possibly for other people as well, such as neighbors. For example:

- Infants and young children may need special supplies, such as bottles and diapers.
- Older adults may not drive or may have mobility or other problems. They may need special help or equipment, such as a walker. Also be sure to include items such as extra eyeglasses.
- People with disabilities will need special plans—so that a person who is hearing-impaired, for example, can receive warnings or other information. Also find out about accommodations at any shelter you may go to.
- Only service animals may be allowed in public shelters, so it's important to plan ahead for sheltering pets. Also prepare a separate disaster kit that includes pet supplies and veterinary records. You may also want to include photographs, in case a pet gets lost.

Learn first aid and CPR.

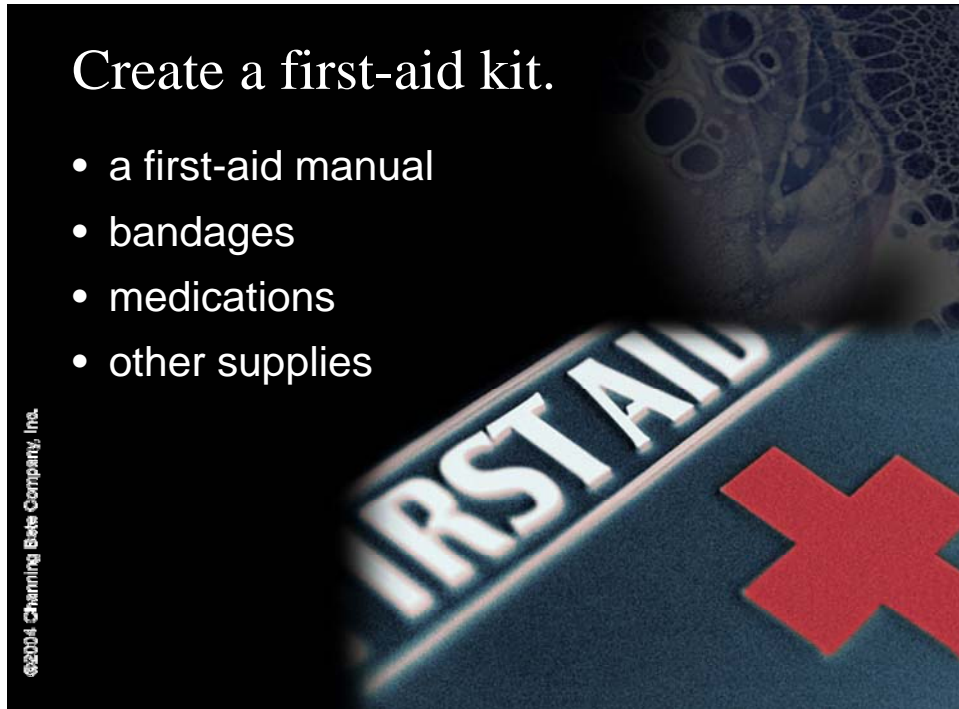


As mentioned before, getting properly trained in first aid and CPR is always a good idea. In a disaster situation, emergency personnel may not be able to get through right away, or they may already be busy elsewhere. It may be up to you to provide care for an injured or sick person until emergency medical help can arrive. Knowing what to do while you're waiting for help can save a life. It's also important to know what not to do (for example, whether or not to induce vomiting after a poisoning).

Create a first-aid kit.

- a first-aid manual
- bandages
- medications
- other supplies

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Plan to create a first-aid kit for your home and one for each vehicle. Use an easy-to-carry container, such as a tote bag. Keep your home first-aid kit where everyone who is capable of using it can reach it easily. The home first-aid kit should include:

- **FIRST-AID MANUAL** - This does not replace proper training, but it can be a helpful guide in many situations.
- **BANDAGES** - Your kit should include bandages of assorted sizes, as well as adhesive tape.
- **MEDICATIONS** - Your kit should include different types of over-the-counter medications. If you or another person takes any prescription medications, ask your pharmacist for advice about including these, as well as instructions for storage and replacement.
- **OTHER SUPPLIES** - These include items such as ointments, a thermometer and scissors, as well as emergency phone numbers and information about people's prescriptions and health conditions.

Emergencies away from home

- school, work and community
- travel
- public places



Family emergency preparedness involves being prepared for emergencies not just at home but also in other places where you spend time. To start thinking about preparing for these, you can ask yourself several questions.

Do you know the emergency procedures at your child's school, at your workplace and in your community?

Are you prepared for an emergency when you travel? Whether it's daily travel or other travel, do you stay alert for hazards and know alternate routes and methods of travel? Do you keep your vehicle in good working order and filled with at least half a tank of gas at all times?

In public places, do you take some time to become familiar with your surroundings? Do you stay aware at all times, so you can respond quickly and calmly if an emergency should occur?

Helping children cope

- Provide needed information.
- Listen.
- Convey confidence.
- Limit media.
- Seek help if needed.

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Talk of terrorism and other disasters can be upsetting for anyone. It's important to give children needed knowledge (but not more than they can manage) and to give reassurance often (through hugs, spending time together and other ways). Many of the ways you can help children cope will be the same before or after a disaster.

Be sure children who are old enough know information such as their address, your work number, how to call 9-1-1 and safe places to go, if needed. Be sure they know what other adults to go to for help.

Listen to questions and concerns, and take their feelings seriously. Answer questions honestly. Give children chances to express themselves in other ways, too, such as through drawing.

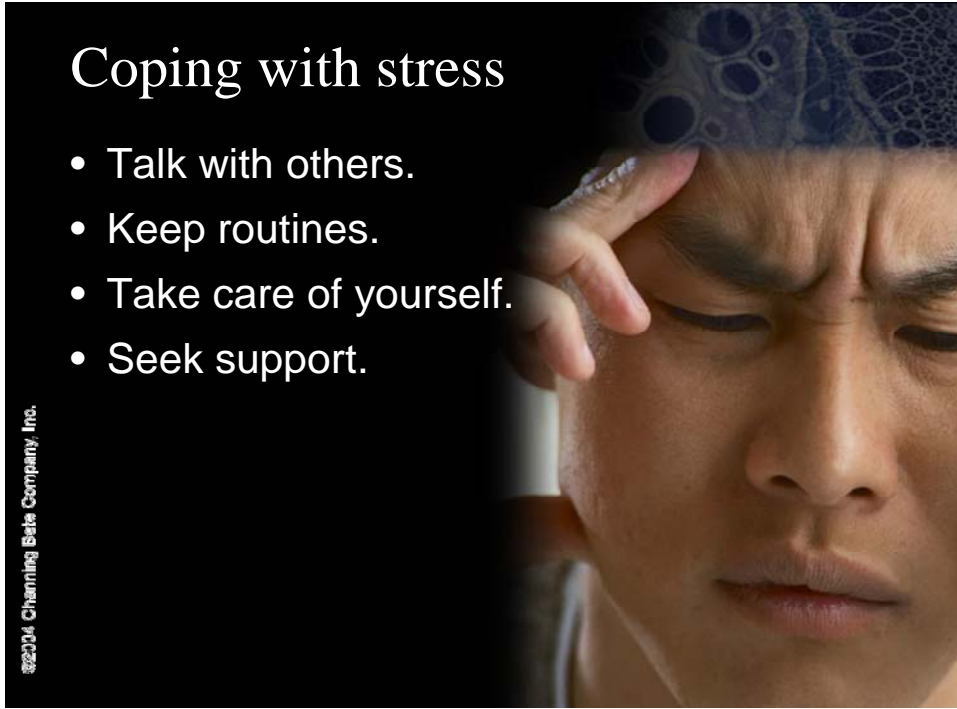
Children can sense adults' feelings. Seeing adults talk and act calmly and confidently can help children feel better. (It's also OK to admit when you're upset, rather than try to pretend you're not.)

If you are concerned that your child is becoming upset by disaster stories in the media, limit TV time and other media exposure.

Coping with stress

- Talk with others.
- Keep routines.
- Take care of yourself.
- Seek support.

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Children and adults can feel stress living on alert for terrorism or other emergencies—or while recovering from a disaster. Signs of stress can be physical or emotional. Some signs include headaches, stomachaches, mood swings, nightmares or trouble sleeping, anger, crying, trouble concentrating and feelings of survivor guilt. Here are some ways to help manage stress:

- Sharing feelings can help you and the other person feel better.
- Continuing with normal routines can help you regain a sense of control and security. Avoid placing too many demands on yourself or others during times of stress.
- Eat a variety of healthy foods each day, and get enough exercise and rest. (But be sure to talk with a healthcare provider before starting yourself or anyone else on an exercise program.)
- Seek assistance from community programs and resources. Join support groups and activities that interest you. And be sure to talk with a health-care provider or disaster counselor, if needed.

Sources of information

- Internet sites
 - www.fema.gov
 - www.ready.gov
 - www.cdc.gov
 - www.redcross.org
- local emergency management office
- local or school librarian

Here are some sources where you can find additional information.



Click [here](#) to take the final test.

Remember to enter your name at the beginning of the test so that you can be properly credited for completion. When you are finished with the test, email it to: SCMRC@schsa.org