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**Before a Storm: Tips, Precautions, and Information**



Every year, your family should review your hurricane plan and make changes as necessary. If you plan to evacuate, your plan should include where you will go, the route to get there, when you will leave and what to take with you, and what preparations you will make to your home.

If you plan to stay, make sure that you have all of the supplies necessary to be on your own for at least 72 hours. If you are planning to go to an evacuation shelter, have your shelter supplies kit packed and ready. Make sure that you have all the materials on hand to protect your home and that you prepare your home no later than when a hurricane warning is issued. You should also trim dead wood and limbs from your trees. Don't forget to make arrangements for your pets.

If a storm is threatening the area, listen to local media for information and actions to be taken. In addition you should:

- Fuel your vehicle. You will need it if the storm hits and power is out.
- Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys and garden tools.
- Install your storm shutters or plywood and secure all doors.
- Prepare boats as appropriate.
- Turn up refrigerators and freezers to their coldest settings.
- Turn off small appliances that are not needed.
- If you evacuate, turn off your air conditioner. If you stay at home and the power goes off, turn off your air conditioner. Turn it back on only after power has been restored in your area.
- Turn off all LP tanks.
- Fill sinks and bathtubs with water.

Get an extra supply of cash. Banks and ATM's may not be operational immediately after the storm. Call an out of town friend or family member to let them know of your plans. Then instruct other family members to call that person for information about your family after the storm. It is usually easier for you to call out of the area after a storm than it is for others to call into the area.

**Tracking a Storm**

When tracking a storm, it is important to remember that a hurricane is not a point on a map. The coordinates that are provided by the National Hurricane Center only indicate the location of the center or eye of the storm. Some hurricanes have tropical storm force winds over 200 miles from the center, and hurricane force winds 75 miles or greater from the center. It is these wind fields that should be tracked. The center of the storm may make landfall 50 - 100 miles away from this area, however strong winds, storm surge, and heavy rains may cause severe damage locally.

It is also important to recognize that hurricane forecasting is not an exact science and that there is a significant margin of error, especially at long range, in forecasting the area of landfall for a storm. Over the past 10 years, the margin of error in forecasting landfall is over 250 miles, 72 hours before landfall. That margin of error is still over 75 miles, 24 hours before landfall. Due to the long evacuation clearance times for this area, evacuation orders may have to be issued 48 hours or more before landfall.

## Watches and Warnings

(Official Watches and Warnings are issued by the National Hurricane Center)

### Tropical Storm Watch

Issued when tropical storm conditions (39 - 73 mph winds) are possible in the specified watch area, usually within 36 hours.

### Tropical Storm Warning

Issued when tropical storm conditions (39 - 73 mph winds) are expected in the specified warning area, usually within 24 hours.

### Hurricane Watch

Issued when hurricane conditions (74 mph or greater winds) are possible in the specified watch area, usually within 36 hours. During a hurricane watch, be prepared to take immediate action to protect your family and property in case a hurricane warning is issued.

### Hurricane Warning

Issued when hurricane conditions are expected in the specified warning area, usually within 24 hours. Storm preparations should be completed.

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## What is Group B Strep?



Group B strep (streptococcus) is a common bacteria. It can grow in a woman's vagina, rectum, or urinary tract. It is almost always harmless in adults. But in rare cases, a woman who has group B strep can infect her baby during the birth. Infection can cause serious illness in the newborn. The good news is that treating the mother during labor reduces the risk of the baby becoming infected. And if a newborn is infected, the infection can be treated.

### Facts About Group B Strep

Learning more about group B strep can help you understand how testing and treatment can help. Here are some basic facts about group B strep:

- It is not a sexually transmitted disease.
- It is not the same as strep throat. (This is caused by group A strep.)
- It often has no symptoms and may cause no problems in adults.
- Test results can be misleading. They may be positive one week and negative the next week.
- Group B strep can be transmitted during vaginal delivery. It cannot be passed during cesarean (surgical) birth.
- A mother with group B strep rarely infects her newborn. (Infection occurs only about 1% to 2% of the time.)
- When a mother is treated during labor and delivery, her baby almost never becomes infected.

Certain factors during pregnancy increase the risk of a baby becoming infected.

### Possible Effects on Your Baby

Group B strep can infect the blood. It can also cause inflammation of the baby's lungs, brain, or spinal cord. Long-term effects can include blindness, deafness, mental retardation, or cerebral palsy. And in rare cases, infection causes death. Infection is most often detected soon after the baby is born.

### How Your Baby May Become Infected

Group B strep often lives in the vagina or rectum. If the amniotic sac breaks early, bacteria from the vagina can travel to the uterus, reaching the baby. Or, as the baby passes through the birth canal, it can come in contact with the bacteria. In rare cases, group B strep can also be passed to the baby after delivery. The source of this type of infection is not well understood.

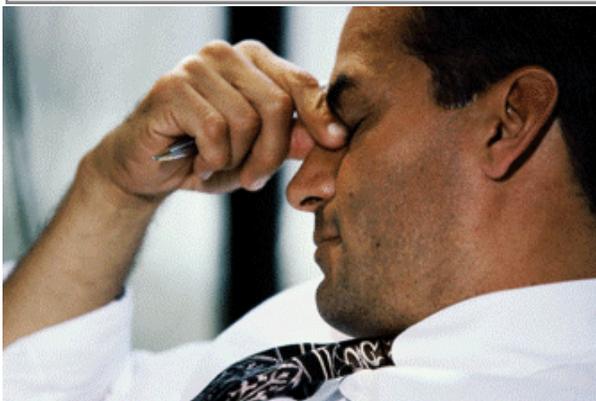
### What Increases the Risk?

Certain risk factors increase the chance that a baby will be infected. They include:

- Breaking or leaking of the amniotic sac earlier than 37 weeks gestation
  - Labor earlier than 37 weeks gestation
  - Breaking of the amniotic sac more than 18 hours before labor begins
  - Fever during labor
  - A urinary tract infection with group B strep at any point in the pregnancy
- A previous baby born with a group B strep infection

*Krames Staywell*

## Control Breathing, Control Stress



You're stuck in rush-hour traffic, glancing at your car's clock every few minutes as you strain to get to work on time. You may not notice, but your breathing is shallow, your pulse rate is high, and your chest feels tight. In fact, you feel this way in many stressful situations.

Sound familiar? Modern society creates more than its share of stress. It's difficult to change some situations — but you can manage how you feel about them, experts say.

Begin with something you take for granted — your breathing. If you're on that busy highway, pay attention to what's going on around you, but pay attention to your breathing, too. It's one of the few things you can control.

"Focusing on your breathing is one of the highly effective ways of reducing stress," says cardiologist James Rippe, M.D., author of 10 books on health and fitness, including "Healthy Heart for Dummies." "It brings you into the here and now," distracting you from your worries.

"We've become addicted to moving and thinking at hyper-speed," adds Stephan Rechtschaffen, M.D., wellness expert and author of the book *Timeshifting*. "When we're under stress, our breathing is short, high up in the lungs. More relaxed breathing doesn't rely on the chest wall, but rather on the abdomen."

Abdominal breathing, experts say, provides the lungs with more oxygen and is more rhythmic. It's something that opera singers and other performers have known for years: Abdominal breathing allows them to take control of their breath, to sing or speak with greater power, and to help them focus on the moment.

Breathing is just the beginning. If you can adjust your breath, you can adjust other things in your life, experts say. Slow your breathing down when you walk into your office or home and you'll notice that you won't jump at the first problem that hits you. When your breath is quiet, you are quiet.

### Practice Your Breathing

Believe it or not, most of us could use a lesson on how to breathe. Practice at home a few times when you're not under stress. Then, try putting these techniques into practice when a stressful situation occurs.

In a relaxed setting, take three really deep breaths, focusing on your exhalations. "Really let it out," says Dr. Rechtschaffen. "It may feel unnatural at first, but stick with it."

Now, begin focusing on where your breath is coming from, experts say. Here's one practice method:

- Sit on the edge of a chair, feet flat on the floor.
- Place one hand on your lower back and the other hand on your abdomen, with three fingers below your navel.
- As you breathe in, your abdomen should rise, like a balloon inflating.

As you breathe out, your abdomen should fall, with the sensation that the balloon is losing its air.

Concentrate on your abdomen, not your chest. Practice from a few minutes to 20 minutes each day. Soon, it will come naturally.

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For assistance with challenges like these, please call your  
New Directions EAP at 800-624-5544 or visit us online [www.ndbh.com](http://www.ndbh.com)