

# *Pregnancy During the Hurricane Season*

Prevention and Health Education Unit  
Prepared by Licensed Health Educators



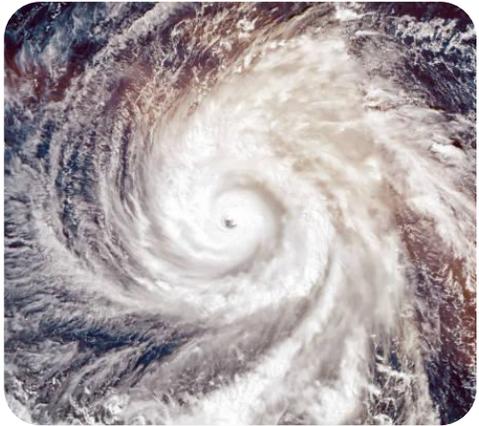
# Objectives

Knowing pre-hurricane preparation methods.

Inform regarding recommendations that you can take or carry out during the hurricane.

Offer recommendations on what to do after a hurricane.

To expose ways to feed your baby during an emergency.



# Hurricane Season



The hurricane season begins on **June 1** through **November 30** each year.

This period or season, can be very stressful for some people, including pregnant women.

To prevent additional worries in the event of a power outage, evacuation, or recovery from an atmospheric event, it is important to prepare and develop a family contingency plan.



**Before the hurricane**

# Pre-Hurricane Preparations

- Before the weather event, contact your OB-GYN to set up a plan with your family.
- Identify a support network. Coordinate with a family member or friend so that you have company, since if an emergency arises, you must be always accompanied.
- Prepare your vehicle, fill up the fuel tank. Have a suitcase or bundle ready and keep it in an accessible area.



# Basic Supply Kit

You must have at least ten (10) days' worth of emergency supplies.



Water: one gallon per person per day, for drinking and grooming

Food: A Supply of Non-Perishable Food

Food and water for pets

Medications and first aid kit

Battery-powered radio

Lantern

Replacement batteries

Whistle to call for help

One outfit change of clothes per person

Masks, soap, hand sanitizer, towels, and personal hygiene items.

Wet wipes, trash sleeves, and general cleaning supplies.

Manual can opener for food, keys or nippers for cutting utilities.

Site Maps

Cell phone, chargers and spare battery

Board games or some kind of entertainment

# Basic Supply Kit

- The emergency suitcase or package must include:
  - Clothing, include pajamas.
  - Baby clothes.
  - Disposable diapers.
  - Prescription medications for at least two weeks.
  - Breast pump.
  - Infant formula.
  - Photo ID and health plan card.
  - Cash.

Identify extra items that you need to add to your package, according to your needs.





- Check with the State Agency for Emergency Management and Natural Disaster Administration (AEMEAD) about what municipal shelter spaces are available during this season.
- Consider your community's plans to protect against emerging diseases.

# Access to the hospital location

- If the hospital where your baby will be born is far from your home, identify family members and/or relatives close to the hospital facility for easy access.
- If you are having complications in your pregnancy, consult with your OB/GYN to discuss whether it is safe for you to leave before the weather event occurs or if it would be better for you to go to a hospital or general shelter during the hurricane.



# Access to the hospital location

- If you have a chronic condition, it will be very important to have your current medications, your current medical history, and your doctor's name and phone number to ensure proper treatment if needed.



# Labor Signs



Full-term delivery: It can occur between 38 and 42 weeks of gestation.

Effacement and dilation of the cervix.

Expel the mucus plug.

Feeling like the baby is lower (latching into the pelvis).

Break your water (it can be a small or large amount of liquid).

Contractions (every 3 to 5 minutes, lasting approximately 1 minute per contraction).

# Emergency Numbers

It is important that you have the following phone numbers available in case of an emergency:

- **Emergencies:** 9-1-1
- **Firefighters:** (787) 725-3444
- **Emergency Management and Disaster Administration:** (787) 724-0124
- **Puerto Rico Police:** (787)793-1234



# Communication Network

Portable radios with batteries or solar radios.

Cell phone with charger and external battery.

Coordinate with neighbors and/or family members on how to achieve communication between everyone, in case of any eventuality.





**During the hurricane**



# Recommendations during the hurricane:

- If you have any signs of labor, call your doctor, call **9-1-1**, or go to the hospital immediately, if it is safe to leave.
  - If you are in a shelter, let the staff know as soon as your contractions begin.
  - If you must evacuate your residence, check where you can take shelter. Be prepared to leave quickly and have your emergency bag or suitcase ready.
  - Notify shelter staff as soon as possible that you are pregnant, even if you have a health condition or problem.
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# Recommendations for staying calm during the hurricane:

Staying calm in emergency situations is easier if we can create a plan. By making decisions in relation to the previous organization, it will give us peace of mind and direction.

- In emergency situations, when it comes to getting information, go to official sources and avoid unreliable media, as these could cause hysteria in the population.
- Perform breathing and relaxation exercises.
- Employ the visualization technique. "If we think of a quiet and safe place, that will help us to achieve calm, thus regulating our palpitations"
- Listen to relaxation music.
- Board games.



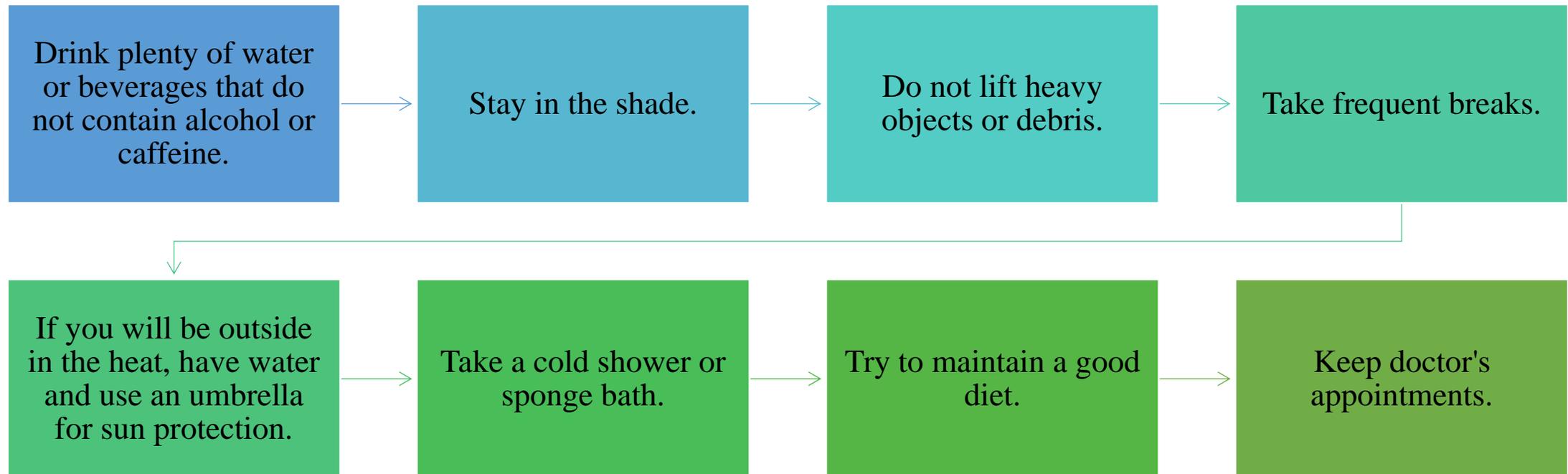


# **After the Hurricane**



# Once the hurricane passes...

- Once the hurricane passes, there will be a cleanup and recovery period.
- This is the time when you should be careful not to become dehydrated and/or overtired, as this can contribute to preterm birth.
- To prevent dehydration and exhaustion, follow these recommendations:



# Once the hurricane passes... (cont.)

Protect yourself from infection by washing your hands often.

Avoid bathing or washing clothes in bodies of water and walking in flooded areas. In this way, you can avoid getting leptospirosis.

Protect yourself from mosquito bites.

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. You can purchase a carbon monoxide (CO) detector to prevent this.

# Once the hurricane passes... (cont.)

Recognize urgent maternal warning signs.

If you are sick, seek medical help immediately. If you are around people with infectious diseases, wear a mask.

Once you are out of immediate danger, continue your prenatal care, even if it is not with your regular healthcare provider.

# Benefits of breastfeeding before, during, and after a hurricane



Breastfeeding is the natural and ideal way to feed your baby in the event of a natural disaster, as it does not require clean, potable water to prepare formula or wash bottles.



This milk does not need to be refrigerated if consumed right away.



Breast milk is harmless and contains antibodies that help protect the baby from common childhood illnesses, such as pneumonia.

# Breastfeeding and the Hurricane Season



If you have a breast milk bank, you should keep it at the right temperature at all times.

Try to get an electric generator. If you don't have one, check with a family member or acquaintance who can store your milk bank while the electrical system is restored.

# Breastfeeding and Hurricane Season



## Guide to Storing Breast Milk

Freshly pumped breast milk		Thawed breast milk (previously frozen)
Ambient temperature (up to 77°F/25°C)	6 to 8 hours	Do Not Store
Insulated fridge with ice packs	24 hours	Do Not Store
Refrigerator (39°F/4°C, back of refrigerator)	Up to 5 days	24 hours
Freezer Inside the refrigerator (5°F-15°C)	2 weeks	Never refreeze thawed milk
Freezer with separate doors	3 to 6 months	Never refreeze thawed milk.
Deep freezer (rarely opened)	6 to 12 months	Never refreeze thawed milk.

# Storing Breast Milk in Hurricane Season



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If a family member is going to store breast milk for you, label it with their name, the baby's name, and the date of pumping.

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If it is to be stored in a public place, the milk should be labeled with both names and placed in a carton with a visible label that reads, "BREAST MILK".

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Put an adhesive tape over it that won't rub off with condensation. This sign must have your name and phone number on it.

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If you're going to keep your milk bank in your home without an electric generator, it's important to buy or make ice. You can fill Ziploc bags with water and freeze them. These must be sealed tightly.

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Place the milk right in the middle of the freezer, and all the surrounding ice, forming a barrier. Avoid opening the door frequently so that the cold does not escape.



# Breastfeeding and the Hurricane Season

By losing electricity, you will lose the ability to use the electric extractor machine.

You can have an adapter with batteries, so you can use the machine without electricity.

Machines usually have a device to plug into the car's power outlet (check and follow instructions).

Another option is a manual extraction machine.

# Recommendations for successfully breastfeeding



Breastfeed as soon as possible

Breastfeed often 8 to 12 times a day

Observe the infant and identify hunger signs.

Allow the baby to finish the feeding and be satisfied

Make sure you're eating well

As much as possible, avoid combining breast milk with formula.

Avoid pacifiers

# Formula Feeding

- Commercial formula is a nutritious alternative to breast milk.
- Have enough formula and purified water for at least 72 hours.

## Shelf life of the prepared formula:

- The prepared formula should be used immediately.
- Avoid leaving formula at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Once you feed the baby, you should discard the excess.



# Prenatal Care

A pregnant woman in a white shirt and grey cardigan is sitting at a desk with a tablet. She is looking at the tablet and talking to a healthcare professional in a white lab coat. The background is a light blue wall.

- As soon as it is safe, make an appointment with our obstetrician-gynecologist to continue your prenatal care.
- Be sure to continue using your medications, prenatal vitamins and folic acid.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting the pertussis, influenza and COVID-19 vaccines during pregnancy. This will help protect you during the term of your pregnancy and will protect your baby for several months after birth.



## *Social and Emotional Aspect*

Dealing with a natural event can be a stressful time. If you feel you may need emotional support in this regard, do not hesitate to contact your mental health provider and discuss it with your OB/GYN.

## ***You can contact:***

- **Medical Advice Line**

**1-844-347-7801**

**TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804**

*Available 24 hours a day/7 days a week*

**Customer Service Line**

**1-844-347-7800**

**TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7805**

*Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.*



# Questions or Comments



# References:

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<https://mothertobaby.org/es/baby-blog/esta-usted-embarazada-o-amamantando-y-afectada-por-un-huracan/>

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Code to access the  
Evaluation of the Event

# Thanks for your participation

For more information: [mas@firstmedicalpr.com](mailto:mas@firstmedicalpr.com)



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