

Chronic Disease & Medication Continuity During Emergencies and Disasters



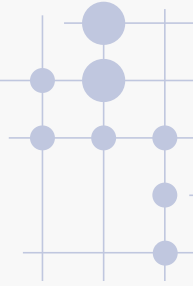


Chronic Disease & Medication Continuity During Emergencies and Disasters

People living with chronic medical conditions may face additional health risks during emergencies and disasters. Severe weather events, public health emergencies, power outages, transportation disruptions, or other crises may affect access to medications, healthcare services, medical equipment, or routine medical follow-up.

Maintaining continuity of care during emergencies is essential to prevent complications, avoid hospitalizations, and protect health and safety. Individuals and families can reduce risks by preparing in advance, understanding their medical needs, and knowing how to manage chronic conditions during difficult situations.

This guide provides practical information to help individuals with chronic illnesses remain safe, prepared, and medically supported during emergencies.



Emotional Reactions During Emergencies Are Normal

Why Chronic Disease Management Is Important During Emergencies

Many chronic diseases require ongoing treatment, regular medications, monitoring, or medical equipment. Interruptions in treatment — even for a short period — may lead to worsening symptoms, serious complications, or medical emergencies.

Conditions that may require special preparation include:

- Diabetes
- Asthma and chronic lung diseases
- Heart disease and hypertension
- Kidney disease and dialysis
- Epilepsy
- Cancer
- Mental health conditions
- Autoimmune diseases
- Disabilities requiring medical support equipment

Emergencies may disrupt:

- Access to pharmacies
- Transportation
- Medical appointments
- Electricity for medical devices
- Communication with healthcare providers
- Availability of medical supplies

📖 **Planning ahead helps reduce health risks during emergencies.**



Continue Taking Medications as Prescribed

Unless advised otherwise by a healthcare professional, medications should continue to be taken exactly as prescribed during emergencies.

Stopping medications suddenly may worsen chronic conditions and lead to serious complications such as:

- Asthma attacks
- High blood pressure crises
- Heart complications
- Diabetic emergencies
- Seizures
- Mental health deterioration

Important recommendations:

- Never stop medications without medical advice
- Take medications at the correct times and doses
- Monitor symptoms carefully
- Contact healthcare providers if medications are running low or unavailable



Keep an Emergency Medication Supply

Individuals with chronic conditions are encouraged to maintain a reasonable emergency supply of essential medications and medical items whenever possible.

Recommended items include:

- Prescription medications
- Copies of prescriptions
- List of current medications and dosages
- Medical reports or summaries
- Identification cards and insurance documents
- Backup batteries for medical devices
- Glucose monitoring supplies
- Inhalers and spacer devices
- Blood pressure monitoring devices
- Dialysis information and emergency contacts
- Hearing aid batteries or mobility support equipment

Medication supply tips:

- Check expiration dates regularly
- Store medications safely in cool, dry conditions
- Keep medications in clearly labeled containers
- Carry essential medications when traveling or evacuating

👉 Keep important medical information accessible at all times.

Managing Diabetes During Emergencies

People with diabetes may face additional risks if insulin, medications, food access, or glucose monitoring become disrupted.

Important preparedness measures:

- Keep an emergency supply of insulin or medications
- Store insulin according to recommended temperature guidelines
- Carry glucose monitoring equipment and extra batteries
- Keep quick sources of sugar available for low blood sugar episodes
- Maintain regular meal schedules when possible
- Monitor blood sugar levels more frequently during stress or illness

Seek medical attention immediately if severe symptoms develop, including:

- Severe low blood sugar
- Confusion or loss of consciousness
- Persistent vomiting
- Severe dehydration

Supporting Children During Emergencies

Children may express stress differently than adults. Some children may become more fearful, withdrawn, irritable, or emotionally sensitive.

Common signs of stress in children may include:

- Increased clinginess
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Fear of separation from parents
- Changes in appetite
- Irritability or emotional outbursts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Withdrawal from normal activities

🏠 Stay calm and seek the appropriate level of care.

Ways families can support children:

- Speak calmly and honestly using age-appropriate language
- Reassure children that adults are working to keep them safe
- Maintain daily routines as much as possible
- Encourage children to express feelings and ask questions
- Spend positive time together as a family
- Limit children's exposure to distressing news coverage

Children often feel safer when adults remain calm and emotionally supportive.

Supporting Older Adults and Vulnerable Individuals

Older adults and vulnerable individuals may experience additional emotional challenges during emergencies, including loneliness, confusion, fear, or difficulty accessing support and information.

Families and communities are encouraged to:

- Check regularly on elderly relatives and neighbors
- Help vulnerable individuals obtain medications and supplies
- Assist with communication and transportation when needed
- Encourage social interaction and emotional reassurance

Community solidarity and support are essential during crises.

Healthy Coping Strategies

Simple coping techniques may help reduce stress and improve emotional well-being.

Helpful techniques include:

- Deep breathing exercises
- Gentle stretching or physical activity
- Relaxation exercises
- Prayer or spiritual reflection
- Journaling or creative activities
- Listening to calming music
- Talking with supportive family members or friends

Maintaining healthy routines and focusing on manageable daily activities may improve emotional resilience.

Signs That Additional Support May Be Needed

While emotional stress is common during emergencies, some symptoms may require professional support if they become severe or persistent.

Seek professional help if you or someone you know experiences:

- Severe anxiety or panic attacks
- Persistent sadness or hopelessness
- Inability to perform normal daily activities
- Severe sleep disturbances
- Intense emotional distress
- Withdrawal from family or community
- Thoughts of self-harm or harming others
- Significant behavioral changes

Early support may help prevent emotional difficulties from becoming more severe.

Mental Health Support Services Available in the UAE

The UAE provides several mental health support services and helplines that offer confidential emotional support and guidance.

24/7 SAKINA Mental Health Support Hotline – Abu Dhabi

The Department of Health – Abu Dhabi launched the 800-SAKINA hotline to provide immediate psychological support and emotional guidance in Arabic and English. The service is available 24 hours a day and supports adults, children, and families experiencing stress, anxiety, panic, or emotional distress.

Contact:

- 📞 800-SAKINA (800-725462)

📞 UAE National Mental Support Line – 800 HOPE

The UAE Mental Support Line provides confidential emotional support through trained volunteers and mental health professionals. Support is available by phone and WhatsApp for UAE residents.

Contact:

- 📞 800-HOPE (800-4673)

Service Website:

[Mental Support Line UAE](#)

Dubai “Itma’en” Mental Wellbeing Service

Dubai Health recently launched the Itma’en service to provide free and confidential emotional support and wellbeing guidance for residents and visitors in Dubai. The service is available in Arabic and English.

Contact:

-  800506



Emirates Health Services Mental Health Support

Emirates Health Services provides mental health services through outpatient clinics, counseling services, and specialized facilities including psychiatric and community mental health services.

Mental Health Services:

[EHS Mental Health Services](#)

Mental Health Awareness Resources:

[EHS Mental Health Awareness Center](#)

Supporting Others During Emergencies

Helping others can strengthen emotional resilience across the community.

You can support others by:

- Listening calmly and respectfully
- Encouraging people to seek support when needed
- Checking on vulnerable neighbors or relatives
- Sharing accurate information from official sources
- Avoiding judgment or stigma related to emotional struggles

Simple acts of support can make a significant difference during stressful situations.

Follow Trusted Official Sources

For accurate updates and guidance, follow trusted official authorities such as:

- National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority
- Emirates Health Services
- UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention
- Department of Health – Abu Dhabi

Avoid sharing rumors or unverified information.

Emergency Numbers in the UAE

- Police: 999
- Ambulance: 998
- Civil Defense: 997

Key Message

Mental health is an important part of overall health and safety during emergencies. Staying calm, maintaining healthy routines, supporting one another, limiting exposure to distressing information, and seeking help when needed can strengthen emotional resilience and improve recovery for individuals, families, and communities.

Thanks



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