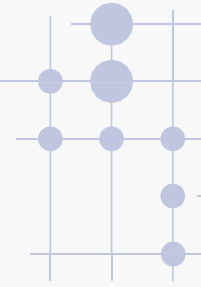


Medication Safety During Emergencies and Disasters





Medication Safety During Emergencies and Disasters



Emergencies and disasters can dislocate healthcare services, pharmacies, transportation, and access to medical advice. During stressful situations, people may rush to buy medications, share medicines with others, use unverified treatments, or take medications incorrectly due to fear or misinformation.

Using medications safely during emergencies is essential to protect health and prevent serious complications. Incorrect medication use may lead to poisoning, side effects, allergic reactions, worsening illness, or delayed medical treatment.

This guide provides important information to help individuals and families use medications safely and responsibly during emergencies and disasters.

Why Medication Safety Matters During Emergencies

During emergencies, people may experience:

- Limited access to healthcare services
- Delays in obtaining prescriptions
- Increased stress and anxiety
- Exposure to misinformation online or through social media
- Pressure to stockpile medications unnecessarily

These situations may increase the risk of:

- Medication misuse
- Accidental overdose
- Drug interactions
- Unsafe self-medication
- Shortages of essential medicines

🔑 Safe medication practices help protect individuals, families, and communities during emergencies.

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Continue Medications as Prescribed

If you are taking prescribed medications for chronic conditions or ongoing treatment, continue taking them exactly as directed by your healthcare provider unless advised otherwise.

Important reminders:

- Do not stop medications suddenly without medical advice
- Take medications at the correct dose and time
- Follow instructions carefully
- Contact your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have concerns

Stopping medications incorrectly may worsen health conditions and lead to complications

Do Not Share Prescription Medications

Prescription medications are prescribed based on an individual's specific medical condition, allergies, age, and health status.

Never:

- Share prescription medications with family or friends
- Take medications prescribed for another person
- Use leftover medications without medical advice

Using someone else's medication may cause:

- Allergic reactions
- Dangerous side effects
- Medication interactions
- Incorrect treatment of symptoms

👉 What is safe for one person may be dangerous for another.



Beware of Misinformation and Unverified Treatments

During emergencies, false medical information and unverified “miracle cures” may spread rapidly through social media or unofficial sources.

Protect yourself by:

- Following trusted health authorities only
- Consulting doctors or pharmacists before taking new medications or supplements
- Avoiding unapproved or unknown products
- Ignoring rumors or unverified health claims

Be cautious of:

- “Quick cure” advertisements
- Unverified herbal or alternative treatments
- Medications promoted without scientific evidence
- Social media advice from unreliable sources

👉 Misinformation during emergencies can cause serious harm.

Store Medications Safely

Improper storage may reduce medication effectiveness or make medicines unsafe to use.

Safe storage recommendations:

- Keep medications in their original labeled containers
- Store medicines in cool, dry places unless otherwise instructed
- Protect medications from heat, sunlight, and moisture
- Keep medicines away from children and pets
- Check expiration dates regularly

Certain medications, including insulin and some antibiotics, may require refrigeration.

Keep a Reasonable Emergency Medication Supply

It is helpful to keep a small emergency supply of essential medications and medical items at home.

Recommended items may include:

- Prescription medications
- Copies of prescriptions
- List of current medications and dosages
- Basic over-the-counter medications
- First aid supplies
- Thermometer
- Medical devices and batteries if needed

Recommended items may include:

- Create shortages for others
- Lead to medication expiration and waste
- Increase risks of unsafe storage

👉 Prepare responsibly and only keep reasonable quantities.

Medication Safety for Children

Children are especially vulnerable to medication errors and accidental poisoning.

Important safety measures:

- Keep medications out of children's reach
- Never call medicine "candy"
- Use correct measuring devices for liquid medications
- Follow pediatric dosing instructions carefully
- Contact medical services immediately if accidental ingestion occurs

Medication Safety for Older Adults

Older adults may take multiple medications and may be at higher risk of medication interactions or confusion during emergencies.

Helpful recommendations:

- Keep an updated medication list
- Use pill organizers if appropriate
- Clearly label medications
- Review medications regularly with healthcare providers
- Seek help if medication instructions are unclear

Family members and caregivers should help older adults manage medications safely.

Use Over-the-Counter Medications Carefully

Common medications such as pain relievers, cold medicines, or antacids should still be used responsibly.

Important precautions:

- Follow package instructions carefully
- Avoid taking more than the recommended dose
- Be aware of medication interactions
- Consult healthcare professionals if symptoms persist

Taking too much medication may cause serious complications.

Recognize Signs of Medication Problems

Seek medical help immediately if someone experiences:

- Difficulty breathing
- Severe allergic reactions
- Confusion or loss of consciousness
- Seizures
- Severe dizziness
- Chest pain
- Suspected overdose or poisoning

In emergencies, contact emergency medical services immediately.

Consult Healthcare Professionals

Doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and healthcare providers remain trusted sources of medical advice during emergencies.

Seek professional advice if:

- You are unsure how to take a medication
- You miss doses
- Your medications run low
- Symptoms worsen
- Side effects develop

Pharmacists can also help explain:

- Medication instructions
- Safe storage
- Side effects
- Drug interactions

Avoid Panic Buying and Medication Hoarding

Panic buying may lead to medication shortages and reduce access for patients who urgently need treatment.

Responsible medication practices include:

- Purchasing only reasonable amounts
- Refilling prescriptions appropriately
- Avoiding unnecessary medication storage
- Following guidance from healthcare authorities

Prepared communities help ensure medications remain available for everyone.

Community Awareness and Shared Responsibility

Medication safety is a shared responsibility between individuals, families, healthcare providers, and communities.

Communities can help by:

- Sharing accurate health information
- Supporting vulnerable individuals
- Encouraging safe medication practices
- Avoiding rumors and misinformation

Follow Trusted Official Sources

For accurate health information and emergency guidance, follow trusted official authorities such as:

- National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority
- Emirates Health Services
- UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention

Avoid relying on unverified social media content or unofficial medical advice.

Emergency Numbers in the UAE

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

Key Message

Using medications safely during emergencies protects health and saves lives. Continue medications as prescribed, avoid sharing medicines, follow trusted medical advice, and prepare responsibly. Safe medication practices help individuals, families, and communities remain healthier and more resilient during emergencies and disasters.

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Thanks



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