



# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: *People with Diabetes*

## DEFINITION:

Diabetes is usually a lifelong (chronic) disease in which there are high levels of sugar in the blood. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas to control blood sugar. Diabetes can be caused by too little insulin, resistance to insulin, or both. There are two major types of diabetes.

**Type 1** diabetes can occur at any age, but it is most often diagnosed in children, teens, or young adults. In this disease, the body makes little or no insulin. Daily injections of insulin are needed. The exact cause is unknown.

**Type 2** diabetes makes up most diabetes cases. It most often occurs in adulthood. However, because of high obesity rates, teens and young adults are now being diagnosed with it. Many people with type 2 diabetes do not know they have it.

## LINKS WITH ADDITIONAL INFO:

<http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-andcare/medication/tips-for-emergency-preparedness.html>

<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/EmergencyPreparedness/ucm085213.htm>

[http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/documents/diabetes\\_disaster\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/documents/diabetes_disaster_guidelines.pdf)

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/disaster-preparedness-diabetes/MY02282>

<http://jdrf.org/blog/2013/emergency-preparedness-for-type-1-diabetes/see-checklist>

## ABOUT NJGAINED:

The NJ Group for Access and Integration Needs in Emergencies and Disasters (NJ GAINED) acts as an advisory board to the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) and the NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP) regarding issues affecting people with access and functional needs (AFN) in New Jersey before, during and after an emergency or disaster. Read more at: <http://www.state.nj.us/njoem/plan/special-needs-njsnap.html>

## FOR OEM/FIRST RESPONDERS:

- **Think beyond dietary needs and insulin**--Anticipate complex health needs secondary to diabetes including but not limited to vision and mobility impairment, renal dialysis, wound care, electrical/water dependence for individuals who use home dialysis. Secondary conditions may be under-reported yet have a substantial impact on shelter considerations.
- **Consider integrating** EMS agencies and MRC's in outreach with diabetes organizations, encourage utilization of Register Ready with reporting of secondary/ comorbid conditions.
- Blood sugar fluctuations can cause altered mental status/changes in behavior. Encourage the use of **medical alert tags** during outreach and promote awareness among shelter staff.
- **Update contact/resource list**, including dialysis providers and medical transport providers

## FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS/COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS:

- **Educate consumers** on preparedness/planning for diabetes and associated health conditions. Provide checklists and coach on creating go bags/kits specific to individual needs, including medications, infusion kits, spare batteries for insulin pump, glucagon, glucose tabs, dietary and fluid needs, etc.
- Discuss ways to **prevent complications** and injury prevention. See "Diabetes Disaster Preparedness" from the New Jersey Department of Health for specific recommendations.
- **COOP Planning** to ensure continuity of operations/services. Ensure staff and consumers are aware of expectations/availability.
- **Update contact list** for service providers and alternate means of assistance. Collaborate with OEM, MRC's, shelter managers to discuss needs in advance of an emergency.

## FOR CONSUMERS AND FAMILIES/CAREGIVERS:

- **Refill medications** and testing supplies on time, store at least three days worth of supplies/medications including emergency glucagons kit, in a labeled, easily accessible container. Include an emergency contact list and physician's orders. Consider informing friends/colleagues/family that you have diabetes, and where your kit is located in case of emergency.
- **If your child has diabetes**, make sure the school has clearly identified which staff member(s) will assist your child in an emergency/evacuation.
- Ask what to expect from your community service providers or home care providers in case of a disaster.
- If there is advanced notice of an emergency, **consider evacuating** to an unaffected area for access to food, water, healthcare needs. Establish list of contacts for medical services and pharmacy in the area you are likely to evacuate to.
- Avoid complications and injuries—**protect feet from debris**
- **Wear medical alert tag**, carry list of medications, allergies, surgeries, other pertinent medical information
- Register with **Register Ready**, include any secondary complications (mobility/amputation/dialysis etc.) in application.

