HOW MUCH MEDICINE SHOULD I KEEP ON HAND FOR AN EMERGENCY?

The American Red Cross lists a 7-day supply of medications and medical items in its survival kit, and Ready.gov lists several days of prescription medicines. How much extra you can hold depends on your prescription, your insurance and your state, so the FDA and CDC say to talk with your doctor or pharmacist about an emergency supply and to learn about your state's emergency refill law.

THE STEPS

01 Keep an up-to-date list of your medicines, conditions and allergies (FDA).

02 Keep a copy of your prescriptions with your supplies (FDA).

03 Ask your doctor or pharmacist about an emergency supply and early refills (FDA, CDC).

04 Learn about your state's emergency refill law (CDC).

05 Store extra nonprescription basics (Ready.gov).

06 Use watertight containers, and a cooler with gel packs for anything refrigerated (FDA).

THE CHECKLIST

- ☐ A current medication list for each person
- ☐ A copy of each prescription
- ☐ The question for your doctor or pharmacist: can I hold an emergency supply?
- ☐ Your pharmacy's phone number, and a second pharmacy
- ☐ A watertight container
- ☐ A cooler and gel packs if anything needs refrigeration

How we write it into your plan. In every plan we write, there is a line for where each person's medication list is kept. We never ask for the list itself. Our free Medical Information Sheet is one page to fill in by hand and keep in a waterproof pouch.

Sources: American Red Cross, Survival Kit Supplies; Ready.gov, People with Disabilities; FDA, Safe Drug Use After a Natural Disaster; CDC, Prepare Your Health: Prescriptions; Ready.gov, Build a Kit. Last reviewed November 18, 2026. General preparedness information, not medical advice. In an emergency, call 911.