Flooding: Tips for Moms & Caregivers

Severe flooding is increasing across the United States in both urban and rural areas and can occur with little notice. Moms and caregivers are often their families' first responders. CARE, with 80 years of disaster relief expertise and a focus on women and girls, knows that planning is essential to staying safe before, during, and after flooding events.

Before the Storm

STAY INFORMED

- ☐ Pay attention to weather advisories through radio or mobile apps that can occur before, during or after storms—for example flash flooding or a boil water notice.
- ☐ Evacuate if told to do so or if you feel unsafe.
- ☐ Know your child's school or daycare emergency procedures and how they will contact you.

PREPARE FAMILY EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

- ☐ Prepare a go-bag with essentials like food, water, flashlight and jackets, as well as specific infant hygiene & feeding items, and child comfort items & toys.



Be Careful When Moving Locations

MAKE AN EVACUATION PLAN

Flooding, especially flash floods, can occur with little notice.

- ☐ Identify safe places you can go out of town and backup routes to get there.
- ☐ Know your child's school or daycare emergency procedures and how they will contact you.
- ☐ If you are unable to evacuate, shelter in place.

MOVE WITH CAUTION DURING FLOODING

Floodwater can be dangerous. Just 6 inches of moving water can knock a person down, and 12 inches can move a car.

- ☐ Never walk or drive through floodwater.
- ☐ If you are carrying a child or are pregnant, be extra cautious as your balance may be affected, increasing your risk of falling.
- ☐ Wear sturdy shoes, use handrails, and stay on dry ground as much as possible.

MOVE TO HIGHER GROUND

- ☐ Avoid low-lying areas that may flood quickly. This may include going to higher levels of your home or building.

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Be Aware of Flood Hazards

AVOID FLOODWATER

Floodwater is likely to be dirty, carry bacteria, and vulnerable to electric shock.

- ☐ Regularly wash children's hands to avoid spreading germs.
- ☐ Clean or discard flood-contaminated toys before children play with them. For items that are not easily disinfected like stuffed animals or pillows, throw them away.



WATCH FOR MOLD

Pregnant women and small children are especially vulnerable to mold and toxins.

- ☐ Mold can develop within 24-48 hours of flooding, even if you do not see or smell it. Wear an N-95 mask if you need to enter a potential space with mold and limit your exposure to these areas.

Toxin Exposure Support

If you are worried you or your baby may have been exposed to harmful toxins, MotherToBaby can provide immediate support:

Call: 866-626-6847

Text: 855-999-3525

Chat: www.mothertobaby.org

LIMIT CLEAN-UP PARTICIPATION

- ☐ Pregnant people and children should not be involved in flood clean-up activities, especially involving mold, dirty water, or heavy lifting.



Flooding: Tips for Pregnant People

Pregnancy adds unique medical and comfort needs during severe flooding events. Taking steps to prepare ahead of time can help you feel more equipped before, during, and after the storm.

Before a Potential Storm

PLAN EARLY—ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE 36+ WEEKS

- ☐ Talk with your provider ahead of time about:
  - Evacuation plans and when to leave
  - Safe transportation options if roads become flooded
  - Specific sheltering needs
  - How to access prenatal care if clinics or hospitals close





PROTECT IMPORTANT MEDICAL DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Have a physical copy of your birth plan, key details about your medical history and contact information for your care provider.
- ☐ Store in a waterproof bag or container.

ADD ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO YOUR HOSPITAL BAG

- ☐ Pack a hospital bag that can double as your emergency preparedness kit.
  - Include these essentials: water, non-perishable food, flashlight, radio, first aid kit, cash, nursing supplies, rain gear.

STAY PREPARED FOR DIFFERENT ADVISORIES

- ☐ Monitor weather alerts and flood warnings through your county's alert system.
- ☐ Leave early if evacuation is recommended, especially during late pregnancy.

Flooding: Tips for Pregnant People

Navigating Flood Risks

PRIORITIZE HYDRATION, REST, AND CALM

- ☐ Ensure you are drinking safe, clean water. Flooding can damage water systems. Check your county's website for any advisories.
- ☐ If possible, avoid clean-up activities especially involving mold or heavy lifting.
- ☐ If you need assistance with cleanup activities, call 2-1-1 for support.

AVOID EXPOSURE TO FLOODWATER

- ☐ Floodwater can contain bacteria, chemicals, and debris that may be harmful to you and your baby.
- ☐ Wear closed-toe shoes, rubber boots, and other protective waterproof gear if you have to navigate through standing water.



RESUME PRENATAL CARE WHEN POSSIBLE

- ☐ Contact your provider if there is any interruption to your care.
- ☐ If you feel sick in any way after exposure, notify a medical provider immediately and let them know you are pregnant.

Get virtual support

JustBirthSpace.org provides national call and text support that can help connect you with doula care and/or help you locate additional services if displaced.

Pay Attention to Symptoms

UNDERSTAND URGENT MATERNAL WARNING SIGNS

- ☐ Signs of pre or post eclampsia: (persistent headaches, dizziness, changes in your vision, extreme swelling of your hands, feet or face, upper right chest pain, trouble breathing)
- ☐ Fever of 100.4 or higher
- ☐ Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- ☐ Severe nausea and throwing up
- ☐ Severe belly pain that doesn't go away
- ☐ Abnormal vaginal discharge, or heavy bleeding before and/or after giving birth
- ☐ Baby's reduced movement outside of their typical patterns