

# HealthBreak

DECEMBER 2014

## Having a Family Escape Plan



No one likes to think about disaster, but having a plan for what to do in case of a disaster is a good idea. Whether the disaster is a fire, a tornado, or a flood, knowing what specific actions to take, and when to take them could save lives.

### Fire

House fires can spread in minutes, so every second matters. Make sure every member of your household knows at least two ways to get out of your house, and have a household “practice drill” twice a year. Remember, if smoke starts to build, “get low and go” is your safest way out. Staying low to the floor prevents you from breathing in smoke and allows you to crawl outside. If your house has a second floor (or more), consider buying collapsible ladders and make sure everyone knows how to use them.

### Tornado

A tornado can devastate a house in seconds. If you don't have a storm cellar, stay as low to the ground as you can, or find an internal room in your house, like a bathroom or closet, with walls or barriers between you and outside. Tornadoes pack strong winds and it's the flying debris that causes damage. Cover yourself with as many objects as you can to keep from being hit. Make sure any children who might be home alone know exactly what to do if a tornado hits. Keep batteries, flashlights, and a weather radio in a place where you can find them in an emergency.

### Floods

Floods happen fairly often and flash floods can bring danger quickly. If you get any notification of a potential flash flood, move to higher ground immediately. If there's any available time, try to move important items to an upper level of your house. Also, disconnect all your electrical devices and turn off the power from your breaker box. Make sure any children in your house know how to turn off the main breaker.

Emergency situations can happen fast and the more prepared you and your family are, the more likely you are to survive. Be creative with children and invent ways to make sure they know how to exit your home quickly and safely, and how to contact emergency authorities with the appropriate information.

For more information on being prepared for emergencies, check out: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).