

Q &amp; A

# MCS & Natural Disasters!



**Q: How can a person with MCS survive if they have to abandon their home in the event of a natural disaster?**

**A:** When disaster strikes, most shelters, especially those which are hermetically sealed, would not be accessible to people disabled by multiple chemical sensitivity. Special foods and medications may not be readily available and qualified medical care may not be accessible. So, planning ahead is key.

Ideally, everything you need should fit into one box or suitcase that can be carried with you at all times. If you drive, the kit could be left in the trunk of your vehicle and will hence always be with you. If you don't drive, a kit should be kept at home, work/school, and extra supplies carried with you when you go out socially and to run errands.

A good emergency preparedness kit contains:

- Medications
- Supplements and Herbal Remedies
- Non-perishable Food
- First Aid Kit with Tolerated Supplies
- Doctors Letter Stating You Have MCS
- A List of Current Medications
- A Change of Clothes
- Safe Sheets and Blanket
- Cash
- Personal Safety Equipment (respirator, mask, and coveralls)
- Personal Hygiene Kit
- Water and a Portable Water Filter
- Evacuation Plan
- Phone List of Emergency Contacts

Anything else which you may need to survive in your unique situation should be included. Additional items to consider may be a tent, pillow, source of heat, and cellular telephone.

Consider a worst case scenario where you must flee the area and cannot find safe shelter. Make a list of several places where you could safely camp out.

State parks often provide camp sites for a minimal fee. It's a good idea to investigate these areas in advance by visiting so that you will know where you can stay.

Bed and breakfast establishments may be another option. Many offer safer accommodations. Make a list of several B&B's in neighboring cities which you could seek shelter.

Contact friends and family with suitable homes in nearby cities and make an agreement to temporarily house one another during unforeseen disasters. That way you will know you have someplace safe and free to go.

Preparing for an unforeseen disaster does cost money. Don't let that stop you. If you can only squeeze out \$10 a month towards it, start preparing little by little. One month you can buy \$10 worth of non-perishable food supplies. The next you could buy something else. It may be slower that way, but you will be progressing towards a complete emergency kit that may come in handy one day.

By preparing for the worst, you will protect your health and come out on top!