

BE READY

Preparedness Guide for Autistic Adults

Practical Steps to Help Stay Safe and Calm During Emergencies

Helpful Tips for Autistic Adults and Support Teams
by NEXT for AUTISM

NEXT FOR **AUTISM**

INTRODUCTION

Emergencies and natural disasters can be stressful and overwhelming, especially for autistic individuals who may experience heightened sensory sensitivities, communication challenges or need for routine.



This guide provides step-by-step resources to help you confidently prepare for emergencies and evacuations. This resource contains personalized strategies, sensory-friendly tips, and clear checklists meant to help you create an emergency kit, plan evacuation routes, and practice self-regulation in high-stress environments. The goal is to help you stay safe, reduce anxiety, and maintain control during uncertain situations.

IMPORTANCE OF PREPAREDNESS



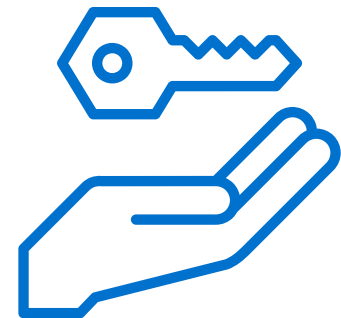
Preparing for emergencies is essential because it helps reduce stress and ensures safety during unexpected events. Preparedness can also provide a sense of control and structure in situations that might otherwise feel chaotic or overwhelming. Having a clear plan and necessary supplies at the ready can help minimize disruptions and distractions, allowing you to focus on what matters most: staying safe and calm.

By planning ahead, you can also account for sensory needs, possible communication supports, and other personal requirements, making it easier to navigate challenges and access support when it's needed most. Preparedness is about being proactive so that you can face emergencies with confidence and resilience.

PERSONALIZATION IS KEY

Each individual will respond to unexpected events differently, with unique planning requirements. Taking time to examine personal needs now, can help in the moment when the pressure and stress are on.

Use this guide to start the planning process, and personalize the resources to fit your specific needs.



PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Creating a preparedness plan involves organizing information and resources so you know what to do before, during, and after an emergency.

Follow these six steps to build a plan tailored to your needs:



1. Identify Potential Emergencies:

Research the events most likely to occur in your area, such as hurricanes, wildfires, power outages, etc. This will help prepare for specific scenarios.

2. Choose Emergency Contacts:

Create a list of trusted people you can contact during an emergency. Include a phone number, email, and address. Share your plan with them so they are ready to help!

3. Plan Your Communication:

If verbal communication is difficult during stressful situations, prepare alternative methods like communication cards that help explain your needs, or use a note app on your phone.

4. Identify Safe Locations:

Find the safe places you can go during an emergency. Depending on the type of emergency, you can find places in your home, such as a basement or inside hallway, or community places such as local shelters for a friend's house. Make sure you know how to get there and make a plan to get there when needed, even using a map if that is helpful.

5. Think About your Sensory Needs:

Plan ahead--packing items and practicing techniques that help you process and calm. Have noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, or fidget tools ready. If going to a local shelter or other location, see if they have sensory-friendly spaces.

6. Collect an Emergency Kit:

Have supplies in an emergency kit at home, ready if power outages or other events is keeping you from leaving your home. If the need to evacuate your home arises, have a "Go Bag" ready with essential supplies, like medication, food, water, and comfort items ready to go. Keep important documents, like identification, passport, etc, in a place you can grab quickly and add to the bag. Have the bag ready to go in place and easy to locate.

Practice Your Plan.

Run through step by step when you feel calm. Practice evacuating, communicating, and using your emergency kit so you know what to expect.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PAGE 1



PERSONAL INFORMATION	
Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Phone Number	
Email	
PRIMARY EMERGENCY CONTACT	
Full Name	
Relationship	
Contact Number	
Alternate Number	
Email Address	
SECONDARY EMERGENCY CONTACT	
Full Name	
Relationship	
Contact Number	
Alternate Number	
Email Address	
NOTES	

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

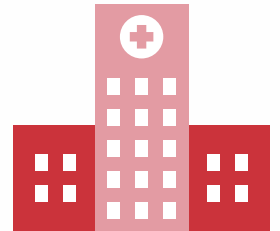
PAGE 2



MEDICAL INFORMATION	
Blood Type	
Allergies	
Primary Care Physician	
MEDICAL HISTORY	
Diagnosis	Treatment Needs
MEDICATIONS	
Name	Dosage
INSURANCE INFORMATION	
Health Insurance Provider	
Policy Number	
Phone Number	
NOTES	

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PAGE 3



LOCAL EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO	
Police Department	
Fire Department	
LOCAL BUSINESS CONTACTS	
Bank	
Pharmacy	
Other ...	
HOME INSURANCE INFORMATION	
Insurance Provider	
Policy Number	
Phone Number	
NOTES	



HOME EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

CLOTHING

- Pajamas
- Underwear
- Bras
- Socks
- Shirts/Tops
- Pants/Jeans
- Shorts
- Comfortable Shoes

TOILETRIES

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Hair Brush
- Soap
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Feminine Products
- Medications (7-day supply)

SENSORY ITEMS

- Noise Canceling
- Headphones
- Fidgets
- Weighted Lap Blanket
- Sticky Putty
- _____
- _____
- _____

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- Identification/Driver's License
- Passport
- Birth Certificate
- Marriage License
- Pictures/Photo Albums
- Emergency Contact List

NON-PERISHABLES

(3-4 DAYS WORTH)

- Canned Beans
- Bagged Chips
- Bottled Water
- Canned Veggies
- Canned/Dried Fruit
- Tuna
- Peanut Butter
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

MISCELLANEOUS

- Flashlight
- Device Chargers
- Headphones
- Radio & Batteries
- Wallet
- Phone
- Pets

“GO BAG” CHECKLIST

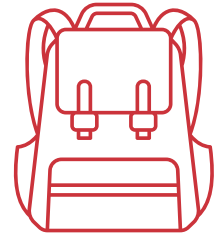
CLOTHING

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SENSORY ITEMS

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TOILETRIES

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MEDICATIONS

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TECHNOLOGY

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FOOD & DRINK

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SAFE LOCATIONS



IN MY HOME

Event Example: Tornado	Where I Should Go Example: Basement	What Do I Take Example: Phone, radio, go bag

OUTSIDE MY HOME

Event Example: Wildfire	Where I Should Go Example: School (address)	What Do I Take Example: Phone, radio, go bag, pets

You may want to find and list multiple options incase one is not available

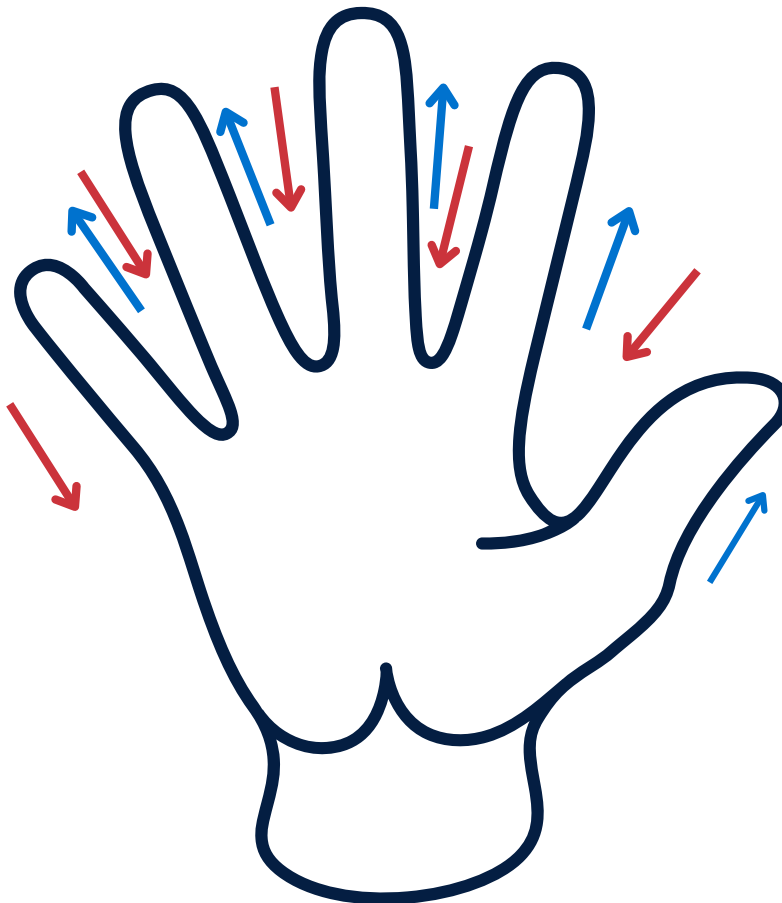
PRACTICE IN CALMING: FIVE-FINGER BREATHING

Using the Five-Finger Breathing can be helpful as a calming strategy during emergencies. It is a grounding technique that combines breathing and touch. Practicing before an emergency, will help you be prepared during a high-stress situation

How to:

- Find a quiet place to sit or stand, whichever is more comfortable.
- Place your forefinger of the opposite hand at the base of your thumb.
- Trace up your finger, and breath in deeply. Moving over the top of your thumb with your finger, breath out while tracing down your thumb.
- Continue this process of breathing in while moving up each finger and breathing out as you move down.
- Go at your own pace, focusing on your breath and the sensation of touch.

Once you have completed all five fingers, take a moment to notice how your body feels.



COMMUNICATION CARDS

PAGE 1

**I am autistic.
I may not be able to
speak, but I can
understand you.**

**I need help.
Please stay calm and
explain things clearly.**

**I have sensory
sensitivities.
Loud noises or bright
lights upset me.**

**I need a quiet space.
Can you take me
somewhere calm?**

**Please write down
instructions or show
me pictures.**

**I am feeling
overwhelmed.
I need a moment
to process.**

COMMUNICATION CARDS

PAGE 2

I do not like being touched. Please ask before helping me physically.

**I have a medical condition.
My emergency contact is**

[write name & number]

**I am nonspeaking.
Please give me time to respond using my device or cards.**

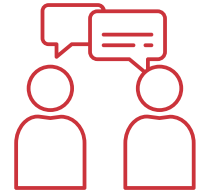
**I need my routine or a familiar object to feel safe.
Can you help me find it?**

COMMUNICATION CARDS

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

www.fema.gov

FEMA Helpline: 1-800-621-3362

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov

CDC (Pet Safety During Emergency)

www.cdc.gov

National Autism Association: Safety Tips for Emergencies

www.nationalautismassociation.org

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

www.hhs.gov

Ready.Gov Emergency Alerts

www.ready.gov

