



PRESS RELEASE

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Residents Encouraged to Safe Guard Medicines/Medical Supplies

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development is reminding residents to take proactive steps to protect medications, insulin, medical devices, and essential health supplies before, during, and after a hurricane.

Chief of Drugs and Pharmaceutical Services, Mrs. Gracia Wheatley-Smith, emphasized that preparation should begin long before a storm threatens.

Before the storm, residents with chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and other illnesses are encouraged to maintain at least a one-month supply of prescription medications throughout the hurricane season.

Mrs. Wheatley-Smith advised individuals to keep an up-to-date list of all medications, including medicine names and dosages and to ensure that medications are dispensed in secure containers rather than plastic bags.

Medications that are in the original container should be stored in zip-locked plastic bags, which is a secondary barrier to flood waters. These medications should then be placed in areas of the home that are unlikely to flood. Persons are also encouraged to include medications and medical supplies as part of their emergency preparedness kits.

Special attention should be given to insulin and temperature-sensitive medications. While most insulin manufactured today can remain unrefrigerated at temperatures between 59°F and 86°F (15°C and 30°C) for up to 28 days, it should be protected from direct heat and sunlight.

Parents and caregivers of children with asthma are urged to have a 'full' or a new asthma inhaler and to inspect the spacers and replace any damaged spacer before a storm threatens.

During the storm in the event of an evacuation, residents should take all medications, medical supplies, and medical records with them. Ensure they are kept in a plastic container so they do not get wet or separated.

Persons using oxygen therapy are reminded to use battery-powered flashlights instead of gas-powered lamps or torches and to keep electrical equipment dry and protected from damage.

Individuals should continue taking medications as prescribed and closely monitor the storage conditions of temperature-sensitive medications during power outages.

Following a hurricane, residents are advised to inspect medications and medical supplies for signs of water damage or contamination if their home was breached by rain or flood.

“If medications remain dry and uncompromised, they may continue to be used. However, medications that have come into contact with floodwaters should be returned to a pharmacy for assessment and replacement. Residents are reminded not to discard potentially contaminated medications until advised to do so by a pharmacist or healthcare professional as this can help identify medications in the event your records are lost,” the Chief of Drugs advised.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed to protecting and promoting the health and social well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands through effective policies, sustainable programmes, and strategic partnerships that support a safe, healthy, and resilient society.

For Additional Information Contact:

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