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## Safeguard Your Health – and Health Records – During Hurricane Season

In Louisiana, hurricane preparedness is essential to the safety and wellbeing of you and your family. With forecasters predicting a “well-above average” 2008 hurricane season, it’s important that you prepare now to ride out the season safely.

As a health insurance provider, we recommend these tips to help you plan ahead, safeguard your medications and protect your health records in case of a disaster like a hurricane.

One of the first things you should do is create a file with all of your important papers. The file should be portable so you can take it with you if forced to evacuate.

### **Your file should include some of the following healthcare documents for yourself and any covered family members:**

- Blue Cross/HMO Louisiana ID cards
- A list of prescriptions, including dosage and strength
- Names and numbers of your doctors
- Personal family information, including names and dates of birth
- Your Blue Health Record, a claims-based three-year history of your medical records (a free service available online through AccessBlue or by calling Blue Cross Customer Service)
- Other personal health records, such as immunization records

### **Other steps:**

- Create an online Personal Health Record (PHR). It’s easy — sign up for AccessBlue at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com), if you haven’t already, and/or log in to create your free PHR. This secure online service lets you review your current claims record with Blue Cross and keep track of your doctors, prescriptions, emergency contact information and more. You will then be able to access your online PHR from any computer with internet access — and if you ever leave Blue Cross, your portable PHR goes with you.
- Keep several days’ worth of your prescription medicines on hand in case you’re unable to reach a pharmacy.
- Complete an Authorized Delegate Form (available for download at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com)) in case you need to discuss health information for covered family members who are 18 or older with our Customer Service representatives.

- If a major hurricane does hit Louisiana, check our website at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com) after the storm for the most up-to-date information to assist you. If you don’t have internet access, contact our Customer Service Department toll-free at 1-800-495-2583.

For more tips on general hurricane preparedness, please visit our website and download our hurricane preparedness health safety tips, available in a PDF format. For additional resources, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

*Source: The Tropical Meteorology Project*

## Staying Healthy After a Hurricane

*The greatest health risks from a hurricane may appear after the storm has passed. Protect yourself and your family with these basic food and water safety tips:*

- Listen to public announcements about the safety of the water supply. Don’t assume that the water in the hurricane-affected area is safe to drink. Use bottled water or boil tap water to make it safer.
- If you can’t boil water, use household bleach to disinfect it and kill disease-causing organisms. Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops) of regular, unscented, liquid household bleach for each gallon of water, stir it well and let it stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle and draw off the clear water for disinfection.
- If your well has flooded, have it tested and disinfected. Direct questions about testing to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals ([www.dhh.state.la.us](http://www.dhh.state.la.us)).
- Do not eat food that may have come into contact with flood water or is not in a waterproof container. Food containers that are not waterproof include those with screw-on caps, snap lids, pull-tops and crimped caps.

*Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*



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# Online Personal Health Records: A Valuable Tool

Keeping track of your personal health records is smart. During hurricane season, it's particularly wise. A portable, online personal health record (PHR) allows you to keep track of your lab tests, doctor visits and prescription medicines and stay on top of your health even if a sudden emergency ruins your paper records or forces you to evacuate without them.

Blue Cross' personal health record provider, WebMD, is a leader in health information services. Your Blue Cross PHR is a portable, comprehensive and easy way to record and manage your records. This free service is available to Blue Cross customers, but goes with you even if you no longer have Blue Cross coverage.

To create your PHR, visit our website at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com) and sign up for our member self-service portal, *AccessBlue* (if you haven't already done so). Once registered for *AccessBlue*, just log in and follow the prompts to view

all the online services available to you, including your PHR.

In a hurry? You can quickly review or print out a Blue Health Record, a three-year look back at your health history compiled from claims filed with Blue Cross or HMO Louisiana. What's the difference between the Blue Health Record and the Personal Health Record or PHR? Your full PHR will be more comprehensive, as it contains data you enter yourself, but the Blue Health Record is a fast and convenient review compiled from Blue Cross' claims system.

Both records are free and secure, and can give you and your family useful health information.

*WebMD is an independent company that provides personal health record services for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and HMO Louisiana, Inc.*

## Blue Cross Receives Accreditation

At Blue Cross, we are committed to quality and safeguarding your privacy. Therefore, we were pleased to receive HIPAA Privacy Accreditation from URAC, a Washington, D.C. — based healthcare accrediting organization.

URAC accreditation standards are recognized nationally as providing benchmarks for quality and privacy in the healthcare industry. The URAC Accreditation program enables healthcare organizations to display a commitment to fair information practices and demonstrate that they have taken the necessary steps to protect health information privacy.

Blue Cross has held the HIPAA Privacy accreditation since 2003 and is one of only 10 companies nationwide to receive such recognition. For more information, visit [www.urac.org](http://www.urac.org).

## Blue Cross Wins Brand Excellence Award

Marking a commitment to customer service, quality and value, Blue Cross has received a 2007 Brand Excellence Award for Member Retention from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The award is given to Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans that retain a high percentage of their members from the previous year.

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 39 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies. Collectively, these companies provide healthcare coverage for more than 100 million people or one in three Americans.



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Have a question about healthcare?  
Click on the **Answer Button** at  
[www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com).

Have a question about your coverage? Call Customer Service  
at 1-800-495-BLUE or use the secure web form  
in the customer section at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com).