

BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Brain Health Matters and Building Resilience to Coronavirus and Hurricanes Make a Difference

We have had a lot to deal with in 2020 and based on the latest forecast from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), we can add hurricanes to that list. The latest estimates from NOAA suggest this may be one of the most active hurricane seasons on record. So, with all of the challenges we are already facing from the pandemic, what is the best way to protect your brain and body (physically and mentally) as you prepare for storms in the time of COVID-19?

Coronavirus and Hurricanes, Oh My!

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health Human Services, we experience a variety of reactions during a disaster. Most of us show resilience, a brain health protective response to stress. Resilience behavior supports brain and body health with the ability to bounce back, cope with adversity, and endure during difficult situations. But after six months of COVID-19, resilience may be running low for some of us. What can we do to prepare ourselves as we enter the most active months of hurricane season? Thankfully, supportive resources to address stress and other hardships, a critical component of resilience, are available.

The [NOAA website](#) offers and number of resources for hurricane preparedness during COVID-19, including forecasts and the links for shelters. Recognizing the COVID-19 pandemic can make preparing for a storm even more stressful, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a special advisory for hurricane preparation during COVID-19. The [CDC guide](#) is designed to help us safely prepare, evacuate, and shelter while protecting ourselves from exposure to the virus. The resources on both of these sites are available in English and Spanish.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO BOOST YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

The CDC recommends the following guidelines for preparing for a hurricane during COVID-19.

- Realize that your planning may be different this year because of COVID-19.
- Allow more time than usual to prepare your emergency supply kit of food, water, and medicine. Home delivery is the safest choice for buying disaster supplies, but that may not be an option for everyone. If you must shop in-person, take steps to safeguard your health, and the health of others, by wearing a mask.
- Sign up for mail order delivery of prescriptions or call in your prescription ahead of time and use drive-through windows or curbside pickup, if available.
- Pay attention to local guidance about updated plans for evacuations and shelters, including special needs shelters and shelters accepting pets.
- Follow social distancing guidelines when checking on neighbors and friends and follow [other CDC recommendations](#) to protect yourself and others.
- Make practicing a brain healthy lifestyle a daily priority and be mindful about building your physical and mental resilience. For example, be physically active, eat well, make sleep a priority, think positive thoughts, experience positive emotions, get outside, participate in an arts and cultural activity, remain socially connected, learn something new, challenge your mind, and experience meaning and purpose consistently. For more ideas see previous [Brain Health Boost](#) posts.

For more information about hurricane preparedness in your community, visit [Manatee County Emergency Management](#) or [Sarasota County Emergency Services](#).

About the Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge, new approach to protecting brain health and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI works collaboratively with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance to build brain healthy communities through education, research, innovation and action, with a specific focus on *brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention, and performance optimization*. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the brain health movement, ***because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.***

To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).