

Lilly Offers Tips for Disaster Preparation for Diabetes

May 22, 2006

With Hurricane Season Approaching, Patients Should Take Precautions Now to Prepare

INDIANAPOLIS, May 22, 2006 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- With hurricane season starting June 1 and tornado season in full force, Eli Lilly and Company (NYSE: LLY), the worldwide leader in diabetes treatment, is offering tips for people with diabetes to help limit interruption of their medical treatment if disaster strikes.

People with chronic medical conditions that require daily medications are among the most vulnerable victims of natural disasters, as access to their homes, medical supplies and even medicines may be interrupted or compromised.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina last summer, people with diabetes faced particular challenges, especially patients using insulin, a hormone that the body needs for the correct use of food and energy. People using insulin need to take their medicine every day, often multiple times, to keep blood sugar levels in balance; meals and therapy routines are often carefully planned.

Stress and erratic eating patterns can change blood sugar levels, and the chaos of a disaster or catastrophic event can confuse these routines and potentially seriously affect the health of people with diabetes. Diabetes affects an estimated 194 million adults worldwide(1) and more than 20 million in the United States.(2)

"Patients with diabetes, especially those taking insulin injections, should make sure to have a reserve supply of medication and supplies for a period of several weeks in the event of a major disaster or evacuation," said Dr. Carlos R. Hamilton, past president, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists. "Experience with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 taught us that medical services, including pharmacies, may not be available and emergency care in shelters may lack the ability to give insulin injections. These emergency supplies should include equipment for self-monitoring of blood glucose, including test strips and monitor batteries."

As a service to help people with diabetes and their caregivers prepare for a natural disaster, Lilly -- one of the world's leading manufacturers of insulin -- offers special tips for Diabetes Disaster Preparation. These helpful suggestions can be applied no matter where you live, whether in a hurricane region, tornado alley, earthquake zone or elsewhere, and can be applied broadly to any medical condition.

* Ensure that your medications and supplies are stored in a defined location and can be easily gathered if you must quickly evacuate your home or place of work

* If you use insulin, keep cool packs or ice in your freezer that can be easily reached to keep your medicine cool while on the go

* Compile an easy-to-identify, easy-to-reach kit that includes:

* Extra medical supplies, such as syringes, cotton balls, tissues, alcohol swabs, blood glucose testing strips, blood glucose meter, lancing device and lancets, urine ketone testing strips and any other items relevant to your therapy and blood sugar monitoring

* An empty hard plastic bottle to dispose of syringes and lancets

- * Small cooler to store your insulin while away from refrigeration
- * Pen and small notebook to record blood sugars
- * Extra pair of glasses (if you wear glasses)
- * Extra copies of prescriptions and health insurance cards
- * Emergency medical information and emergency contact list, including your caregiver's and physicians' names and phone numbers. If you are a parent of a child with diabetes, keep a copy of the physician's orders for your child's care on file with the school, as well as in your disaster kit
- * Up-to-date glucagon emergency kit (if using insulin) and fast-acting carbohydrate (such as glucose tablets or orange juice)
- * Non-perishable items such as granola bars, unsweetened cereal, hard candies, peanut butter and crackers, and water
- * Typical emergency items such as a First Aid kit, flashlight, whistle, matches and candles, radio with batteries, and work gloves
- * Keep the kit up-to-date and ensure you have enough supplies to last at least a week
- * Keep something containing sugar with you at all times in case you develop low blood sugar
- * Maintain your meal plan to the best of your ability and keep hydrated. However, food and water supplies can often become contaminated during a disaster and it may be necessary to boil water before drinking
- * Monitor your blood sugar frequently and record your numbers
- * Increase your food intake during periods of excessive physical exertion (such as lifting heavy objects or walking longer-than-usual distances) by eating appropriate snacks between meals
- * Wear shoes at all times and examine your feet often, as people with diabetes are more vulnerable to developing infections. If you have a foot wound, seek medical attention immediately
- * If you are relocated or affected by a disaster, call your doctors as soon as possible to touch base and maintain the continuity of your medical care
- * If you are a parent of a child with diabetes, make sure that you clearly identify which school staff members will assist your child in the event of an emergency
- * If you are displaced or need to evacuate, identify yourself immediately as a person with diabetes and report any related conditions so that authorities can provide for proper medical care

"No one can anticipate the effect of a natural disaster, but with proper preparation and care, people with diabetes can survive and manage their disease with limited interruption while dealing with the aftermath of a disaster," said Dr. Sherry Martin, medical advisor, Eli Lilly and Company. "Taking the time to prepare now may make a huge difference in an emergency."