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Disasters usually are unexpected, happening quickly with little warning. They range from family illnesses or tragedies to wide-ranging devastation to property and loss of life brought about by natural causes, terrorism or epidemics. You, your family and staff can better cope during or after a disaster by creating a plan to implement and having a few safety nets in place. Planning is essential, because in the midst of a crisis it's not likely you'll do your best thinking.

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LEADERSHIP VOICES OF EXPERIENCE



Hurricane Katrina is still in the news and likely will be for a long time to come. We asked the area's dental society leadership teams if they would share their experiences and insights to help others prepare for possible disasters and recovery efforts. Here's what they had to say.

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What do YOU think?



Do you have other tips to share from personal experience for disaster planning?

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PREPARE YOUR PSYCHE FOR A DISASTER



Hot Button

Very large disasters that have touched us all and evoke a common memory include Hurricane Andrew, Oklahoma City, 9/11 and Katrina. One thing that can safely be said about all people who experience a disaster is that life is never the same. Here's some of what we've learned about the psychological response to disaster.

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DEALING WITH DISASTER— FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS



“Things are back to normal, the NEW normal,” says **Dr. Jamie Manders, a general dentist from New Orleans**. She and her husband live on the West Bank, and she considers herself fortunate that their home did not flood during Hurricane Katrina, though it did sustain considerable damage. She sold her practice two years ago and now works for that dentist several days a week. Right now, the practice has a lot of new patients coming in because so many people have moved and their dentists have left town. She also worked for the dental school at LSU, but after the storm the school moved to Baton Rouge, and she was laid off.

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MONITOR AVIAN FLU PANDEMIC INFORMATION

International health experts are warning of a deadly human influenza epidemic. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the H5N1 avian flu virus has met all but one of the prerequisites for the start of a pandemic. WHO is continually monitoring the status of avian influenza outbreaks to determine whether person-to-person transmission of the virus has become more efficient. At this time, there is no evidence of improved efficiency of transmission.

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