

# Disaster Information for Special Populations

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## OBJECTIVES

To provide relevant information for community officials and health and human services providers regarding the needs of special population groups in planning and preparation before, and response and recovery after, disasters and emergencies.

To provide information to assist members of special population groups in preparing for disasters and emergencies.

## METHODS

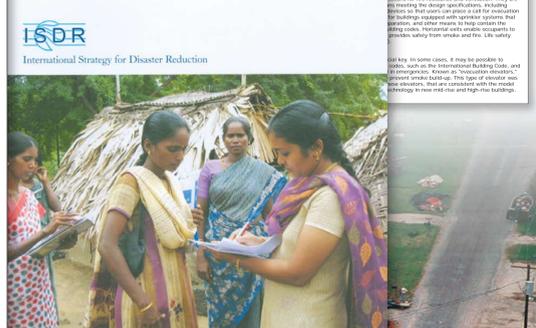
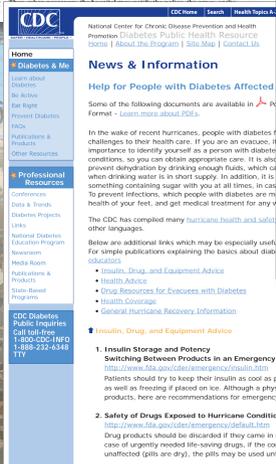
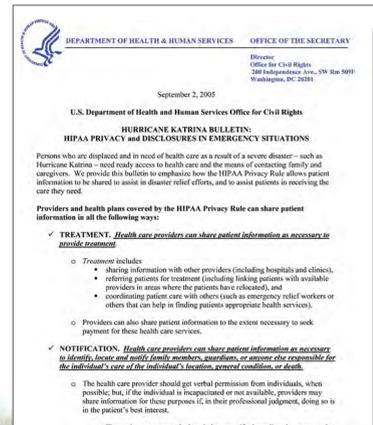
A Web site on health issues related to disasters and special populations was created after natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires, diseases such as SARS and West Nile Virus, and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 illustrated the need to ensure widespread access to knowledge about populations with unique needs in these situations. The population groups addressed on the Web site include the mentally and physically disabled; the aging; minority, ethnic, and language groups; women and children; and others whose situations require that different or specialized measures be taken both in preparation for and response to disasters. The information resources are intended to be used for planning and response purposes by community public health and emergency planners and by families and individuals.

## RESULTS

The resource became public in January 2008 (<http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/outreach/specialpopulationsanddisasters.html>) with approximately 75 links plus subject searches of MedlinePlus and PubMed. The authors found a very large number of sites on the subject and selection was a challenge. Many state and local government and organizational sites were of high quality; however, the selected links presented on this page are primarily national in scope.

## CONCLUSIONS

The authors were impressed with the large volume of documents available related to the special requirements of special population groups. It is of critical importance that those planning for disaster response recognize that there are groups with special needs and prepare for them.



*"In the days after Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana, about 125 critically ill newborn babies and 154 pregnant women were evacuated to Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge."*

Rama Lakshmi  
 The Washington Post  
 August 17, 2006

*"Pregnant women face greater risks—like premature births, low-birth-weight babies and infant deaths—during the stressful conditions of a disaster. This can make delivering a child difficult and potentially life-threatening."*

Theresa Shaver, Executive Director  
 White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood  
 The Washington Post  
 August 17, 2006

