

<http://hivmanagement.org/emergency/>

Disaster / Emergency Information
for
New Orleans' HIV Outpatient Clinic and LSU Infectious Diseases
Basic Science, Educational, Clinical, and Research Programs
<http://hivmanagement.org/emergency/>

This site includes the following critical information regarding the HIV Outpatient Clinic in New Orleans and the LSU Section of Infectious Diseases for use during emergencies:

1. **contact information for the staff of the LSU Infectious Diseases section, the HIV Outpatient Clinic, and Delta AETC.**
2. **information to access medications,** and
3. last-resort solutions for medication issues including discontinuation of **antiretrovirals** and **narcotics.**
4. **disaster planning**
5. **current location for obtaining healthcare if you are in New Orleans**

Discontinuation of Antiretroviral (HIV treatment) Medications

1. **If possible, avoid stopping your antiviral medications.** This will maintain your health to the greatest extent. Seek refills of medications early after a disaster to avoid running out of medications. Try the sources above or any local AIDS service organizations or clinics. Do not be hesitant about contacting these organizations; many are in existence to provide assistance to YOU. Try the Yellow Pages or the internet. Use an internet search engine such as **Google.com** to search for exactly the following and include the quotation marks: "AIDS AND [put the name of the town or city you are in here]" For example if you are in Tucson, Arizona try **AIDS AND "Tucson Arizona"** in the Google search box.
2. If you are going to run out of one HIV medication, do not continue the other HIV medications. Stop all of your HIV medications at the same time unless you are taking Viramune (nevirapine), Sustiva (efavirenz,) Emtriva (emtricitabine) or Epivir (lamivudine.) If you are taking Viramune, Sustiva, Epivir, or Emtriva, try to stop these medications approximately one week before you run out of your remaining medications. Continue the other medications in your HIV therapy for approximately one week after you stop Viramune, Sustiva, Epivir, or Emtriva.
3. Resume your HIV medications only if you can be certain of an uninterrupted supply. For example, if you have already stopped taking your HIV medications and you will be moving to another city where you are not certain where to locate HIV medications, do not restart your HIV medications before you move.
4. Do not attempt to stretch your medications out by taking them at lower dosage or less frequently. **Take your medications, all together, at the prescribed dosage, or NOT at all!**

To summarize, avoid stopping your medications if possible. If you are forced to stop your HIV medications stop all of your HIV medications at the same time with the exceptions of Sustiva (efavirenz,) Viramune (nevirapine,) and Emtriva (emtricitabine) which are discussed above. Do not restart your HIV medications until you are certain that you will have a continuous or uninterrupted supply. Do not stretch your remaining medications out by taking at a lower dose or less frequently.

Discontinuation of Pain Medications, Sedatives, Sleeping Pills

1. **Just as in the case of HIV medications, it is best to avoid stopping these medications.** Seek refills of medications early after a disaster to avoid running out of medications. Try the sources on this site/handout or any local AIDS service organizations and clinics, or the local **Red Cross.** Do not be hesitant about contacting these organizations; many are in existence to provide assistance to YOU. Try the Yellow Pages or the internet. Use an internet search engine such as **Google.com** to search for exactly the following and include the quotation marks: AIDS AND "put the name of the town or city you are in here". For example if you are in Tucson, Arizona try **AIDS AND "Tucson Arizona"** in the Google search box.
2. If you must stop sedative or pain medications, do not stop them suddenly or you will experience withdrawal. Withdrawal symptoms include increased pain, anxiety, tremor, sweating, diarrhea, restlessness, insomnia. Although withdrawal is not dangerous, withdrawal is VERY uncomfortable. These symptoms can last from 2-4 days for short acting drugs like oxycodone or hydrocodone to 1-2 weeks for methadone. Sudden withdrawal from Valium (diazepam) or Xanax (alprazolam) and related drugs can also be dangerous and include seizures.
3. Taper off of any sedative medications if necessary and if possible. The most comfortable way to do this is to count the number of pills you have left and to arrange them so that you take 1 on the last day, 2 on the day before that, 3 on the day before that, 4 on the day before that, etc. Another way to taper off is to take one-half as much medicine every other day until you are off the medication.
4. If you are going to run out too quickly to taper off of these medications, take your empty bottles and proof of identification to a local emergency department wherever you are located. Inform the emergency department personnel there that you have evacuated from a disaster situation and that you have taken the pain medication or sedatives for a long time. After they evaluate you, you may be continued on your pain medication or sedative or they may decide to taper you off due to lack of information.

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