Hepatitis and Hurricanes

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The Atlantic hurricane season is June 1 through November 30. North and South Carolina along with neighboring coastal states are still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. There were at least 32 deaths, and flooding from the storm continues to ruin the homes, lives, and hope of many, many people.

What do hurricanes have to do with hepatitis? First, the aftermath of hurricanes create sanitation issues. An outbreak of hepatitis A or other infectious diseases are always a risk when public safety cannot be guaranteed. Takeaway: Be sure you are up to date with hepatitis A and other immunizations.

Second, hurricanes and hepatitis increase the need for blood products. Hepatitis does this when it destroys livers. Hurricanes do this because donation centers close down, but the need for blood products increases. You may not give blood if you have hepatitis C, but you can urge others to donate. Additionally, there are blood donation restrictions for certain people who are close to HCV-positive individuals. Takeaway: If you can donate blood or blood products, do so. If you can't donate blood or blood products, encourage others to do so. Do this wherever you reside.

And finally, hepatitis and hurricanes are devastating. Both need donations of time and money. Now more than ever, please include tissue and organ donation to your giving. All of us, young and old, with or without hepatitis C, can request that our organs and tissue be donated upon death. The use of organs is made on a case-by-case basis at the time of death. Talk to your family and friends your wishes. Find out what the guidelines are in your state. Click here for more information and to register as a donor at DonateLife.net. Another good site to check out is organdonor.gov.

Hurricane season lasts for half a year. Hepatitis season is year round. Both are devastating and both need our help.

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