



## AOTS 15. In the event of a disaster

We have learned a lot from the Christchurch earthquake and other natural events in the South Island which have challenged services to continue providing people with OST meds. We cross our fingers (and toes) and hope you will never be in a situation where you need this information but provide it now to help you plan for the unexpected and to assure you we have a plan in place to minimise the disruption of OST to you in the unlikely event of a natural disaster in Auckland.

### The AOTS emergency/ disaster plan

AOTS has a comprehensive plan in place should a disaster/emergency happen (though we hope we never need to use it). The plan is based on the assumption that should a disaster strike it is unlikely to affect the entire Auckland region so the plan can be implemented at any CADS unit.

The AOTS staff who are able to get to work will be focused on trying to continue providing OST by:

- Contacting all the community pharmacies in Akld that AOTS clients attend to find out which pharmacies are open and working
- Providing the dispensing pharmacies with names and doses of clients likely to present there
- Responding to calls from clients

**Note:** Under these unusual circumstances NO changes to dose or takeaways can be made. Nor will clients be able to change the pharmacy they usually go to until things get re-established. We will need to keep things simple and the community pharmacies will be crucial to our ability to continue providing the service

### What you need to do

If a disaster happens and you need your methadone, Suboxone® or other OST medication and you don't have takeaways or something to tide you over:

1. try contacting your pharmacy to see if they are going to be open to dispense to you
2. contact AOTS and leave a message with your contact phone number
3. If you can't get through to your usual AOTS team try another AOTS team. (Numbers over page). Texts may or may not get through so if you have no response within 4 hours or by mid-afternoon call again
4. as a last resort go to a hospital pharmacy.

If you're in Shared Care, talk to your GP about any plans they may have for their own practice.

Our colleagues at the Christchurch Opioid Recovery Service (ex-Chch Methadone Programme) who have had to deal with earthquakes and snowstorms also suggested:

- Listen to the radio to find out what's happening which roads are closed, etc.
- Have some rubbish bin liners (apparently they are very useful when toilets don't work!)
- Get some hand gel; it saves using water
- Invest in some thermal underwear. A disaster could happen in winter and there'll be no heating available
- Buy a wind-up torch that includes a radio and cellphone charger from electronic and hardware stores. If you don't have one of these get a battery-run radio– and make sure you have some charged /new batteries available.
- Have something you can use as photo ID in case you have to go to a different pharmacy than your usual one or there could be people working at your usual pharmacy who you don't know. If you don't have anything you can use as photo ID your key worker may be able to assist
- Have cash on hand! Many people don't have cash available when a disaster strikes and you're going to need it

<b>Issued by</b>	CADS Document Controller	<b>Issued Date</b>	Feb 2016	<b>Classification</b>	AIS22
<b>Authorised by</b>	CADS Clinical Director	<b>Review Period</b>	36 months	<b>Page</b>	Page 1 of 2

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If you cannot get your usual OST meds because of a civil emergency (earthquake, flooding, etc) the medications over the page may ease your discomfort.



Civil Defence recommends you have a well-equipped first aid kit so this might be a good place to start. Check with the pharmacy that these meds are okay for you. Some may not be advisable for people with liver problems, pregnant women, etc.

Symptoms relieved	Name of product (drug)	Dose	Approx cost <sup>i</sup>	Where to get it
Stomach Cramps	Gastro-soothe	20mg every 6 hours	\$15 - \$20	Pharmacist-only medicine (only a pharmacist can sell it to you) Prescription only
	Buscopan (Hyoscine Butylbromide)	2 tabs 4 times a day (taken about every 4-6 hours)	Not fully subsidised	
Nausea and/or vomiting	Antinaus (Prochlorperazine)	Up to 20 mg initially then 5-10mg up to 3 times in 24 hours	\$3	From a doctor (prescription-only medicine)
	Buccastem <sup>ii</sup>	1-2 tabs twice daily	\$6 (not fully subsidised)	From a doctor if for nausea and vomiting
Diarrhoea	Imodium, Dicap, Nodia (Loperamide)	2x 2mg tabs to start then 1-2 tabs every 6-8 hours (no more than 8 tabs per day)	\$8 - \$15	Pharmacy or supermarket  Diastop is a pharmacy only medication because it contains phenoxylate an opiate derivative; some pharmacists won't sell it to AOTS clients
	Diastop	2 x 2.5 mg tabs initially, 3-4 times a day. If diarrhoea acute, initial dose of up to 10 mg (four tabs) then 2 tabs every 6-8 hours. Max daily dose 20 mg	\$10 retail or \$3 on prescription	
Muscle aches	Panadol (Paracetamol <sup>iii</sup> )	1-2 tabs every 4 hours, 8 max in 24 hours	Average cost \$10	Pharmacy or supermarket
	Nurofen (Ibuprofen)	200 – 400 mg every 8 hours	Average cost \$10	Pharmacy or supermarket

Read the literature that comes with any meds to check that they are okay for you. Don't take any medication that you are allergic to, that has upset you in the past, or that interacts with any other medications or medical conditions that you have. If you're unsure whether you should take any of these (or any other meds you might have available) talk it through with your doctor.

For information on civil defence and emergency management call 0800 22 22 00 or go to [www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz) [www.auckland.cdemg.org.nz](http://www.auckland.cdemg.org.nz)

Pitman House 815-5841 North 488-2701  
South 263-2000 West 837-9400

AOTS txt 4769 (remember to add your name to the txt)

<sup>i</sup> Prices at time of printing. If you get any of these meds on prescription they will usually cost less at the pharmacy

<sup>ii</sup> Please note: Buccastem is contraindicated in patients with impaired liver function

<sup>iii</sup> Generic brands are cheaper than buying 'name' brands

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