

BRIEFS

Military OneSource Assists Hurricane Victims

Military OneSource is available 24/7 to answer your questions and help you find resources – call anytime – 1-800-342-9647. For overseas dialing call 800-3429-6477 or overseas collect: 1-484-530-5908.



For informative articles on children and how they cope with the mobile military lifestyle, visit the Military Child Educational Coalition (MCEC) at www.militarychild.org.

Improved Tricare Benefits

Citing the debt of gratitude owed to those who have served the country and made the ultimate sacrifice, a top defense health official recently revised the Tricare policy for transitional survivors.

The change allows active-duty families who live overseas, and who are on accompanied orders at the time of their sponsor's death, to remain eligible for Tricare Prime benefits overseas during the three-year transitional survivor period.

"It is fitting that policy be changed to provide the same transitional survivor health-care benefits as those available in the United States to the family members residing overseas who supported their active-duty members and experienced a significant loss," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

The new policy extends Tricare Overseas Program Prime enrollment, including Tricare Global Remote Overseas and Tricare Puerto Rico Prime, to command-sponsored beneficiaries already enrolled in those programs.

During the three years following a sponsor's death, surviving spouses and children younger than 21 years old (23 if enrolled full time in school) remain eligible for many active-duty family benefits as transitional survivors. At the end of the transitional survivor period, Tricare eligibility continues for survivors at the retiree family member status and rates.

Transitional survivors who are not enrolled in TOP Prime will continue to have access to overseas military treatment facility appointments on a space-available basis. Transitional survivors who choose to disenroll and relocate to an overseas site served by a military facility may enroll in TOP Prime at the new location. Those transitional survivors without nearby military facilities will be eligible for benefits under Tricare Standard at active-duty family rates.

Transitional survivors who choose to return to the United States may re-enroll in Tricare Prime in areas where it is offered. In areas where Tricare Prime is not offered, they may use Tricare Extra or Standard at active-duty family rates during the three-year period.

More information on Tricare survivor benefits is available online at www.tricare.osd.mil/Factsheets/viewfactsheet.cfm?id=324.

(Courtesy of Tricare Management Activity).

Fortified Gum is Added to MREs to Help Prevent Tooth Decay

According To The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine PAO,

Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD., Meals, Ready-to-eat (MREs) will soon contain gum that helps reduce tooth decay. The new gum, made with the alternative sweetener xylitol, works by blocking the bacteria that cause cavities. The gum currently provided in MREs contains sugar and can cause tooth decay.

This change in the MREs, approved by the 2004 Joint Services Operational Rations Forum, is partially due to a recent study showing a significant increase in tooth decay for deployed Soldiers.

