

Caregiver Assistance News

"CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS"

Emergencies – Take Protective Measures

Emergency Planning

Recovering from an emergency or a natural disaster tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done *today*.

In addition to the standard supplies of food, water and first aid kits, consider these additional precautions:

- Create a **network of neighbors**, relatives, friends and co-workers. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.
- List the type and **model numbers of medical devices**, like oxygen tanks and wheelchairs.
- Note **medications that require refrigeration** and have a cooler chest ready.
- If the person in your care is in a wheelchair or has **mobility problems**, plan for how they will evacuate. Have a manual wheelchair as a backup for a motorized one.
- Be prepared to **bring your own durable medical equipment** to an evacuation shelter. Most don't have them.
- For blind or visually impaired persons, keep an **extra cane** by the bed and **attach a whistle** to it.
- For hearing impaired, **store hearing aids in a container** attached to the nightstand or bedpost, so they can be located quickly.
- Have **ID information** for the person as well as copies of emergency documents, evacuation plans and emergency health information card.
- Ask your doctor about stocking up on a **week's supply of all prescription medication**.
- Make sure everyone knows where the first-aid kit and **emergency supplies are located**.
- Make a **communication plan** so if you are separated from your family you will know how to contact one another.
- Designate **backup provider** in case you can't reach the person in your care.



In an emergency, Alzheimer or dementia patients can sense when something is wrong. Remain calm, explain what is happening simply, and give clear directions.

Source: CDC; FEMA; www.agingcare.com

Family Communication Tips

Staying in touch with family and friends during an emergency is important. Name an out-of-state friend or relative as the contact person that everyone gets in touch with. Someone outside of the area of the emergency, power outage, or natural disaster will be better able to keep everyone informed as each person “checks in.” Be sure all family members know the phone number. Program the contact person’s phone number into each person’s cell phone speed dial list. List the person as **“ICE” (In Case of Emergency)** in your phone. Emergency personnel will often check ICE listings to reach someone you know. Tell your family and friends that you’ve listed them as emergency contacts.



- * Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.
- * Community alert systems will text or e-mail to let you know about weather and emergency conditions.
- * Register the person in your care with emergency response providers so they can be located during disasters. To learn more, visit <http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>

Create an Emergency Supply Kit

An emergency supply kit should contain everything you and the person in your care will need for *three days*. Make *two* kits. In one kit put everything you will need to stay where you are and make it on your own for a period of time. The other kit should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you. Besides food and water and basic emergency first aid kit, supplies should include:

- ✓ Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both; local maps
- ✓ Flashlight and extra batteries and a whistle to signal for help
- ✓ Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- ✓ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- ✓ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- ✓ Pet food, extra water and supplies for your pet or service animal
- ✓ Specialized items, like extra wheelchair batteries, hearing aid batteries, oxygen, catheters, medications

For more information, read Ready.gov’s “Preparing Makes Sense for Older Americans” or visit the Red Cross website.

Taking Care of Yourself—Some Pains You Shouldn't Ignore

Caregivers—it's important to pay attention to pain. Some of these pains need immediate attention:

- **Worst Headache of Your Life.** Although a cold or sinus infection could be the problem, you could have a brain hemorrhage or brain tumor. Do not wait; go to the emergency room.
- **Pain or Discomfort in the Chest, Throat, Jaw, Shoulder, Arm, or Abdomen.** This could signal a heart attack or pneumonia.
- **Pain in Lower Back or Between Shoulder Blades.** It could also be caused by high blood pressure, circulation problems, smoking or diabetes.
- **Severe Stomach Pain.** Appendicitis, gallbladder and pancreas problems, stomach ulcers, and intestinal blockages are possible causes that need immediate attention.
- **Calf Pain.** This can be a sign of deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a blood clot in the leg's deep veins. Without fast treatment, the clot could break loose and travel to the lungs, which could be fatal. If you have unusual swelling and pain in your calf muscles, see a doctor immediately.
- **Burning Feet or Legs.** This is a common sign of diabetes.

Source: WebMD



Inspiration

The best way out is always through.

~Robert Frost

Live Life Laughing!

Nice, I see you bring your meds everywhere.



Don't Fall – Be Safe

The more medications a person takes, the more likely he is to fall. People who take four or more prescription drugs have a greater risk of falling than those who take fewer drugs. Check with a doctor if you think medications are causing dizziness or unsteadiness. Do not change medications on your own.

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SAFETY TIPS—Before a Blackout – Be Prepared

Losing electrical power often means losing more than lights: refrigeration, water supplies, and cell phones all depend on a power supply. If you are *warned* of a coming blackout:

- Keep electricity use as low as possible to help power companies avoid rolling blackouts.
- Fill plastic containers with water and freezer them. Leave about an inch of space inside each one, because water expands as it freezes. This ice will help keep food cold during a power outage.
- Most medication that needs refrigeration can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours without a problem. If unsure, check with your physician or pharmacist.
- Keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full because gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- Know where the *manual* release lever of the electric garage door opener is located and how to operate it. Garage doors are heavy, so you may need help to lift it. Always keep the garage door key with you.

Source: www.Ready.gov

NEXT ISSUE... MAKE ALZHEIMER'S ACTIVITIES MORE FUN