

Disaster Tips for People with Special Needs

In a disaster, people with special medical needs have extra concerns. This information will help you and your family prepare for an emergency.

Medications

- Always have at least a two-week supply of all your medications. In some emergencies, such as an influenza pandemic, you may need to prepare for even longer.
- Store your medications in one location in their original containers.
- Have a list of all of your medications: name of medication, dose, frequency, and the name of the prescribing doctor.

Medical supplies

- Have an extra two-week supply of any medical supplies you use, such as bandages, ostomy bags or syringes.

Electrically powered medical equipment

- For all medical equipment requiring electrical power – beds, breathing equipment, or infusion pumps – check with your medical supply company and get information regarding a back-up power source such as a battery or generator.

Oxygen and breathing equipment

- If you use oxygen, have an emergency supply (enough for at least a two-week period).
- Oxygen tanks should be securely braced so they do not fall over. Call your medical supply company regarding bracing instructions.

- If you use breathing equipment, have a two-week supply or more of tubing, solutions and medications.

Intravenous (IV) and feeding tube equipment

- Know if your infusion pump has battery back-up, and how long it would last in an emergency.
- Ask your home care provider about manual infusion techniques in case of a power outage.
- Have written operating instructions attached to all equipment.

Emergency bag

- In the event that you have to leave your home, have a bag packed at all times that contains:
 - A medication list.
 - Medical supplies for at least two weeks.
 - Copies of vital medical papers such as insurance cards and power of attorney.

People who can help

- An important part of being prepared for a disaster is planning with family, friends and neighbors. Know who could walk to your home to assist you if no other means of transportation is available.
- Discuss your disaster plans with your home health care provider.
- Ask your local fire department if they keep a list of people with special medical needs; ask to be included if they do maintain a list.
- Keep a phone contact list handy of people who can help.



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