

Home Health Care and Emergency/Disaster Planning

Introduction

It is important to know how to prepare and respond in the event of an area emergency or weather related emergency so that your infusion therapy is not interrupted or affected. This booklet is written to provide helpful tips and important instructions. It should be used in addition to instructions from your home care nurse.

Important Contact Information

- If there is an emergency in the area that affects the telephone system, you may not be able to reach our staff by land phone or cellular phone.
- We will make every effort to reach our patients using telephone, personal home visit, or through local law enforcement in the aftermath of an emergency; however, this may not always be possible.
- If you have any medical or infusion related needs please proceed immediately to the nearest emergency room for assistance.

Know What to Expect

- Find out what types of natural emergencies have occurred in the past, and what types might be expected.
- Find out when these emergencies are most apt to happen.
- Find out how you will be notified if evacuation is required.
- Know your local Red Cross and law enforcement telephone numbers. Do not use "911" unless you have a true emergency. Know the regular office telephone number of the local police.

Know What to Take With You

- There will be restrictions in most shelters on what items you can bring with you. Not all shelters have adequate storage facilities for medications that need refrigeration.
- We recommend you call ahead and find out which shelter in your area will let you bring your intravenous medications and/or enteral tube feeding and supplies. In addition, let them know if you will be using a pump that operates on wall current.

Planning In Advance

- We would rather send you ample supplies before the emergency rather than try to deliver supplies after the emergency has occurred.
- We need you to give us as much information as possible before the emergency. We might ask you for the name and phone number of a close family member, friend, or neighbor. We might ask you where you would evacuate to if necessary.
- Since Vital Care, Inc. has approximately 60 affiliated franchised pharmacies located in approximately 20 states, knowing your plans in advance will help us find another pharmacy to service your needs if you evacuate to another area.
- Lastly, we will need an accurate count of how many doses and supplies you have in your home so we can send you enough to get you through a one (1) to two (2) week period after the emergency.

Helpful Tips

- Make sure you have plenty of extra batteries if your therapy is given by a battery-powered pump.
- Get all pump and teaching materials provided and take them with you if you go to a shelter or emergency room.
- If your therapy is given by “gravity” on a pole, pack two (2) metal clothes hangers to use as improvised IV poles. They can be bent and hung over a doorway or closet/shower rod.
- Pack at least one (1) weeks’ worth of supplies in a plastic-lined box or waterproof tote bag or box. Make sure the seal is watertight. Large size “Hefty™” zip bags are perfect.
- Pack plenty of antibacterial soap or alcohol-based hand gel.
- Leave us the name and phone number/address of any locations to which you will be evacuating or relocating to before or after an emergency.
- Contact your home care agency and your pharmacy when you return home so that your service and deliveries can be resumed.
- If you do not have a special needs emergency shelter in your immediate area, contact your state or local emergency management services to request additional shelter recommendations.

- We encourage you to comply with all evacuation recommendations provided by emergency management services.
- Arrange to have an ice cooler with ice of sufficient size and quantity to transport your medications with you to an emergency shelter.

For More Information...

Every emergency situation is different. It is impossible to predict all the different situations that can occur after an area-wide emergency. You will receive additional instructions from your home care agency and our pharmacy.

For additional information on preparing for and responding to emergencies, contact your local American Red Cross or emergency management services agency.

Notes and Instructions: