

Preparing to Care for an Elderly Family Member or Friend During an Emergency

Use this checklist to help prepare your home in case an elderly parent, family member, friend, or neighbor needs to stay with you during an emergency.

Food & Water

- ☐ Ask about special dietary needs.
- ☐ Check for food allergies.
- ☐ Check for diabetic, low-sodium, kidney, or other restricted diets.
- ☐ Store foods they can easily chew and swallow.
- ☐ Keep familiar foods they will actually eat.
- ☐ Have soft foods available if needed.
- ☐ Have nutritional drinks if they normally use them.
- ☐ Make sure cups and dishes are easy for them to hold.
- ☐ Keep drinking water within easy reach.
- ☐ Know whether they have any doctor-ordered fluid restrictions.

Medications & Medical Information

- ☐ Have a current medication list.
- ☐ Include the medication name, dose, and time taken.
- ☐ Know what each medication is for.
- ☐ Have the prescribing doctor's information.
- ☐ Have pharmacy information.
- ☐ Bring the original medication bottles when possible.
- ☐ Know which medications require refrigeration.
- ☐ Have a plan for keeping refrigerated medications at the proper temperature.
- ☐ Keep a list of medical conditions.
- ☐ Keep a list of allergies.
- ☐ Have insurance and Medicare information available.
- Keep emergency contact information with their medical records.

Medical Equipment

- ☐ CPAP machine and supplies.
- ☐ Oxygen equipment and supplies.
- ☐ Nebulizer and medications.
- ☐ Blood glucose meter and test strips.
- ☐ Insulin supplies if needed.
- ☐ Hearing aid charger or batteries.
- ☐ Electric wheelchair or scooter charger.
- ☐ Backup batteries for important equipment.
- ☐ Backup power for essential medical equipment.
- ☐ Test medical equipment with your backup power before an emergency.

Bathroom & Toileting

- ☐ Make sure they can safely use your toilet.
- ☐ Consider a raised toilet seat.
- ☐ Consider toilet safety rails.
- ☐ Have a bedside commode if needed.
- ☐ Have adult briefs or protective underwear if needed.
- ☐ Stock extra wipes.
- ☐ Stock disposable gloves.
- ☐ Have disposable bed or chair pads.
- ☐ Have barrier cream or skin-protection products.
- ☐ Keep extra toilet paper.
- ☐ Keep plenty of trash bags and sealable bags.

Bathing & Personal Hygiene

- ☐ Make sure they can safely enter and exit your shower or bathtub.
- ☐ Consider a shower chair.
- ☐ Use a non-slip bath mat.
- ☐ Consider a handheld shower head.
- ☐ Have no-rinse bathing wipes.
- ☐ Have no-rinse shampoo if needed.
- ☐ Keep extra washcloths and towels.
- ☐ Have toothbrush and toothpaste.
- ☐ Have denture cleaner and a denture cup if needed.
- ☐ Have moisturizer for dry or fragile skin.
- ☐ Keep their normal personal-care products on hand.

Sleeping Area

- ☐ Make sure the bed is not too high or too low.
- ☐ Make sure they can get out of bed safely.
- ☐ Avoid using a low couch if they have trouble standing.
- ☐ Keep their cane or walker within reach.
- ☐ Have extra pillows if they normally sleep elevated.
- ☐ Use a waterproof mattress cover if needed.
- ☐ Keep a flashlight near the bed.
- ☐ Install a nightlight or motion light.
- ☐ Keep a clear path from the bed to the bathroom.

Fall Prevention

- ☐ Remove loose throw rugs.
- ☐ Remove cords from walking paths.
- ☐ Reduce clutter.
- ☐ Improve lighting.
- ☐ Watch for slippery floors.
- ☐ Make sure furniture they may grab is stable.
- ☐ Provide non-slip shoes or slippers.
- ☐ Watch for pets that may get underfoot.
- ☐ Clearly mark steps or changes in floor level.

Mobility

- ☐ Bring their cane.
- ☐ Bring their walker.
- ☐ Bring their wheelchair.
- ☐ Bring their scooter if needed.
- ☐ Bring braces or prosthetics.
- ☐ Bring wheelchair cushions.
- ☐ Bring chargers and spare batteries.
- ☐ Make sure their equipment fits through your doors.
- ☐ Check whether they can safely climb your steps.
- ☐ Check whether they can get into your vehicle.
- ☐ Decide where mobility equipment will be stored during evacuation.

Hearing, Vision & Dentures

- ☐ Bring eyeglasses.
- ☐ Have spare glasses if available.
- ☐ Bring hearing aids.
- ☐ Have extra hearing-aid batteries or a charger.
- ☐ Bring dentures.
- ☐ Have denture supplies.
- ☐ Have a magnifying glass if helpful.
- ☐ Use large-print instructions if needed.
- ☐ Make sure they can hear smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- ☐ Make sure they can hear emergency alerts.

Power Outages

- ☐ Identify everything they depend on that uses electricity.
- ☐ CPAP.
- ☐ Oxygen equipment.
- ☐ Lift chair.
- ☐ Hospital bed.
- ☐ Electric wheelchair or scooter.
- ☐ Nebulizer.
- ☐ Medical refrigerator.
- ☐ Hearing-aid charger.
- ☐ Know the wattage of essential equipment.
- ☐ Know how long your backup power can run it.
- ☐ Test your backup power system ahead of time.
- ☐ Know how they will get out of an electric lift chair during an outage.

Heat & Cold

- ☐ Have extra blankets.
- ☐ Have warm socks.
- ☐ Have layered clothing.
- ☐ Have safe backup heat.
- ☐ Have battery-powered fans for hot weather.
- ☐ Have cooling towels if appropriate.
- ☐ Know where you can relocate if your home becomes too hot or too cold.
- ☐ Check on them frequently instead of assuming they are comfortable.

Dementia, Memory Problems or Confusion

- ☐ Know whether they are at risk of wandering.
- ☐ Keep exterior doors secure.
- ☐ Keep their normal routine as much as possible.
- ☐ Put simple signs on important rooms.
- ☐ Clearly identify the bathroom.
- ☐ Keep familiar belongings nearby.
- ☐ Have family photos available.
- ☐ Keep familiar books, blankets, or other comfort items.
- ☐ Make sure someone knows when they are awake during the night.
- ☐ Have identification information available in case they wander.

Clothing

- ☐ Have several changes of clothing.
- ☐ Have comfortable sleepwear.
- ☐ Have a robe.
- ☐ Have warm socks.
- ☐ Have easy on shoes.
- ☐ Consider elastic-waist pants.
- ☐ Choose clothing that is easy to put on and remove.
- ☐ Avoid difficult buttons, belts, or shoelaces if they have limited hand strength.

Evacuation

- ☐ Add the elderly person to your evacuation plan.
- ☐ Know who will assist them.
- ☐ Know who will gather their medications.
- ☐ Know who will gather medical equipment.
- ☐ Make sure they can safely enter your vehicle.
- ☐ Make room for their walker or wheelchair.
- ☐ Make room for oxygen or other medical equipment.
- ☐ Keep a ready-to-go bag for them.
- ☐ Practice how long it takes to get everyone into the vehicle.
- ☐ Plan for the evacuation to take longer than it normally would.

Emergency Go-Bag for the Elderly Person

- ☐ Medications.
- ☐ Medication list.
- ☐ Medical information.
- ☐ Insurance cards.
- ☐ Identification.
- ☐ Doctor and pharmacy contacts.
- ☐ Change of clothing.
- ☐ Adult briefs or other continence supplies.
- ☐ Personal hygiene items.
- ☐ Eyeglasses.
- ☐ Hearing aids and batteries.
- ☐ Denture supplies.
- ☐ Snacks they can eat.
- ☐ Water.
- ☐ Small comfort item.
- ☐ Phone charger.
- ☐ Medical device chargers.

Caregiver Planning

- ☐ Decide who manages medications.
- ☐ Decide who prepares meals.
- ☐ Decide who helps with bathing or toileting.
- ☐ Decide who helps with mobility.
- ☐ Have at least one backup caregiver if possible.
- ☐ Make sure the primary caregiver gets enough sleep.
- ☐ Write down the elderly person's normal daily routine.
- ☐ Know what assistance they normally receive at home.
- ☐ Ask their regular caregiver for instructions before an emergency if possible.
- ☐ **Pets**
- ☐ Plan for their pet if they have one.
- ☐ Pet food.
- ☐ Water.
- ☐ Medications.
- ☐ Leash.
- ☐ Carrier.
- ☐ Bedding.
- ☐ Litter and litter box if needed.
- ☐ Vaccination information.
- ☐ Make sure their pet can safely stay with your pets.

Comfort, Privacy & Dignity

- ☐ Give them a private place to change clothing.
- ☐ Provide privacy during bathing and toileting.
- ☐ Give them their own place for personal belongings.
- ☐ Let them make choices whenever possible.

- ☐ Keep familiar items nearby.
- ☐ Have books, puzzles, cards, radio, or other entertainment.
- ☐ Remember that suddenly leaving home can be frightening and stressful.

Important Documents

- ☐ Photo identification.
- ☐ Medicare or insurance cards.
- ☐ Medication list.
- ☐ Medical-condition list.
- ☐ Allergy list.
- ☐ Doctors' contact information.
- ☐ Pharmacy information.
- ☐ Emergency contacts.
- ☐ Advance directive if applicable.
- ☐ Power-of-attorney information if applicable.
- ☐ Paper copies stored somewhere easy to grab.

The Final Test

Ask yourself:

If an elderly family member or friend called tonight and said, “I can't safely stay here. Can I come to your house?” would you be ready?

- ☐ Do we know what they can eat?
- ☐ Do we know what medications they need?
- ☐ Can they safely get into our house?
- ☐ Can they use our bathroom?
- ☐ Do we have somewhere appropriate for them to sleep?
- ☐ Can we operate their medical equipment during a power outage?
- ☐ Can we keep them warm or cool?
- ☐ Can we evacuate them along with ourselves?
- ☐ Do we have enough supplies for their personal needs?
- ☐ Do we have enough help to care for them?

Remember: You aren't just preparing extra food and a place to sleep. You're preparing your home and your routine to safely care for another person.

Normal Prepping Let's Prepare Together for Whatever Life Throws Our Way.