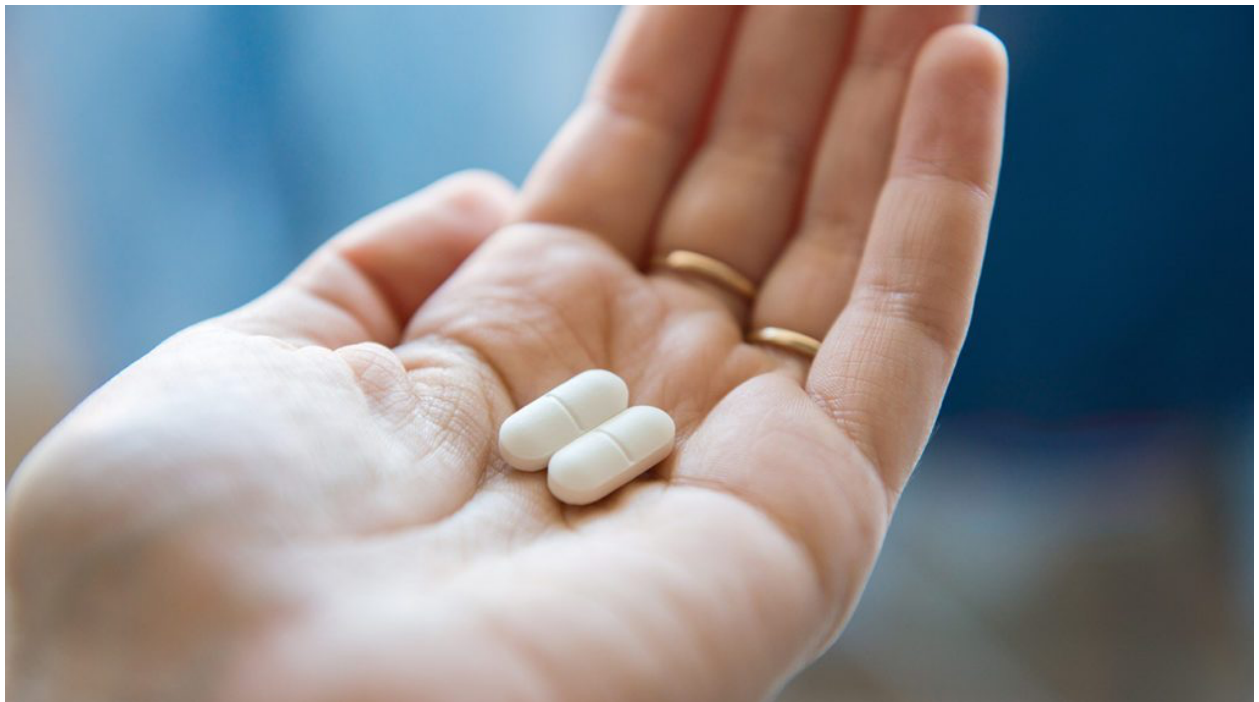


Emergency Preparedness For

**PEOPLE WHO USE LIFE SUPPORT
SYSTEMS, HAVE MEDICAL NEEDS,
AND/OR COMPROMISED IMMUNE
SYSTEM**



If you or a family member uses a life support system, have medical needs or a compromised immune system, you will want to take proactive steps to ensure that those needs can be met following an emergency of any kind. Think about your medical needs as well as medical supplies and devices that you use on a daily basis (such as: a suction machine, home dialysis device, motorized wheelchair, oxygen, aerosol tents, respiratory devices, syringes, etc.) and how you can prepare your emergency “Go Kit” to continue using them for up to seven days following a disaster.

Individuals with weakened immune systems and/or medical conditions that affect the lungs may be at increased risk from environmental contaminants following a disaster.

If your medical condition may require you to go to a hospital instead of a general population shelter, consult with your physician (and medical insurance company) about whether you would need a signed letter from the physician authorizing preadmission during a disaster. Keep in mind that dialysis, respirators, etc., may require special arrangements during and after a disaster. Oxygen, on the other hand, may be able to be offered at several shelters.

In addition to the general preparedness activities, you may find the following tips helpful:

CREATE A CARE-GIVING FILE . . .

- Keep an updated record of medications, including dosage, frequency, and any other health changes.
- Include any special dietary information and special instructions.

AN EMERGENCY “GO KIT” . . .

Have a bag packed at all times at home and at work with the medications and medical supplies you use on a regular basis. In the event of an emergency, you may have to leave your home on a very short notice or stay at work for a prolonged period of time.

Consider using a 3-ring binder or create a folder on your communication device(s) and include information that would be needed in a shelter to assist you in the event that you are separated from your family, caregiver, or personal care attendant.

Include the following items:

- A ten-day supply (minimum) of all your medications. Store the medications in their original containers or have a copy of the prescription. Rotate medications every six months.

- List each medication; name of medication, dosage, frequency, and the prescribing doctor.
- A two-week supply (minimum) of the medical supplies you know you will need, such as bandages/dressings, nasal cannulas, colostomy bags, suction catheters, syringes, etc. (include a week supply in your Emergency Kit for work). Rotate these supplies every 6 months.
- Include a calendar with regular medical appointments.
- Keep a supply of disposable facemasks and gloves, for extra protection when needed. If you have a respiratory condition maintain a 7-day supply of facemasks.
- Determine which facilities your providers may use to provide medical services or procedures to you during and after a disaster.
- Have tools and supplies needed to maintain the respirators, or other electrically powered equipment.
- If you have a respiratory, cardiac, or multiple chemical sensitivity condition, store a 7-day supply of towels, masks, industrial respirators, or other supplies you can use to filter your air supply.
- List allergies and what to do to assist you (e.g. “my epinephrine is in my purse”). Include what you may be allergic to (i.e. peanuts, peas, milk, eggs, other foods, penicillin, aspirin, antibiotics, narcotics or pain relievers, anesthetics, adhesive tape, latex, insect bites, bee stings, etc.)
- List the model name, manufacturer, and contact information for the respirator and/or other life support equipment.
- Consider including informational materials or pamphlets to explain your medical conditions.
- Include your list of emergency contacts including the type of help or information they can provide for you.

LIFE SUPPORT, OXYGEN, AND BREATHING EQUIPMENT . . .

- Attach written operating instructions to all equipment.
- Have a seven-day supply (minimum) of the breathing equipment supplies that you need on a daily basis such as tubing, solutions, medications, etc.

- Have at least a seven-day emergency supply of oxygen.
 - Oxygen tanks are heavy and can create a hazard during an earthquake or fire. Check with your medical supply company about how to brace or secure them to prevent damage from falling.
 - Check with your provider to determine whether a reduced flow rate may be used in the event of a disaster to prolong the life of the system. Record on your equipment the reduced flow numbers so that you can easily refer to them.
- Determine which suppliers would be able to provide service in the event your system becomes inoperable or your supplier is unable to provide service.
 - Post "Oxygen in Use" signs in your home or workplace.
 - Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near you so you can get to it quickly in case of an emergency.

Department of Water and Power – (800) DIAL-DWP (342-5397)

Register your use of life-support devices with the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP). DWP will make every effort to restore power as soon as possible to those who need it most when there are power outages. Registering for this service may also qualify you for a discount rate. **DO NOT COUNT ON YOUR POWER BEING QUICKLY RESTORED.** DWP personnel may not be able to get to you after a major disaster/earthquake.

INTRAVENOUS (IV) AND FEEDING TUBE EQUIPMENT . . .

- Attach written operating instructions to all equipment.
- Have a seven-day supply (minimum) of the IV and feeding tube equipment supplies that you need on a daily basis such as tubing, solutions, medications, etc.
- Know if your infusion pump has battery back-up, and how long it would last in an emergency. 71
- Ask your home care equipment provider about manual infusion techniques in case of a power outage.

ELECTRICALLY POWERED MEDICAL EQUIPMENT . . .

- Attach written operating instructions to all equipment.
- Medical equipment that requires electrical power such as breathing equipment or infusion pumps may become inoperable when the electricity fails. Talk with your health care provider about how you can prepare for its use during a power outage. Contact the medical supply company for information regarding a back-up power source such as a battery or generator.
 - After installing back-up power equipment, you can check with your local utility company to be sure it is properly installed.

COMPROMISED IMMUNE SYSTEM . . .

- Keeping a 10 to 14 day supply of medication in a kit may be difficult due to a variety of factors, including storage requirements (light, temperature, etc.) It is recommended that you keep as much on hand as possible and talk with your health care provider or pharmacist about what you can do to prepare.
- If you have routine treatments in clinics or hospitals, talk with your provider about how to continue treatments and identify back-up services in your area and what to do if you are evacuated.
- If you receive services in your home, it is important to talk with your service providers (transportation services, home health care, personal assistance services, oxygen providers, etc.) and identify back-up services and providers in your area and what to do if you are evacuated.

If you are undergoing cancer treatment and are displaced from your home, the National Cancer Institute, Cancer Information Service (NCI-CIS) can offer assistance on where to receive care.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) – (800) 4-CANCER (422-6237)

<http://Cancer.gov/>