

Emergency Preparedness



Home and Hospice Services

Disaster Preparedness Procedures

For Patients of NorthShore University HealthSystem Home and Hospice Services

- You are your own first responder
- In a disaster or emergency situation, our staff may not be able to get to your home; therefore, visits will be prioritized and reassigned as appropriate
- Make sure you always have three days of medical supplies on hand—dressing supplies, medications, etc. (see additional pages for specifics)
- Calling 911 may not get you the help you need; emergency responders and NorthShore Hospice staff may not be able to respond to emergencies or deaths during an emergency
- For urgent needs during a disaster, to communicate with our office
 - o Try our main number first
Hospice: (847) 475-3002
 - o In the unlikely event that there is a hospice phone number failure, we can be contacted by calling Evanston Hospital at **(847) 570-2000**
 - Identify yourself as a hospice patient, and state you are having difficulty getting through
 - The operator will relay the information to the proper on-call staff
- Let us know if it is not safe to get to your address
- If you are moving to a safer location, let us know how to contact you

Emergency Preparedness

For Persons with Disabilities

CREATE A PERSONAL SUPPORT NETWORK AND DISCUSS IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Prior to emergency, set up a support network with people you trust to check on and assist each other after a disaster
 - Make it a three-person network minimum, if possible
- Exchange important keys
- Share an emergency supply location
- Share copies of your relevant documents, evacuation plans and health information card(s)
- Agree on and practice methods of contacting each other in an emergency—telephones may not work
- Notify each other when you are going out of town and when you return

SUBSCRIBE TO MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM

- Examples include but are not limited to ADT® Medical Alert System, LifeStation®, Philips Lifeline®, MobileHelp® and Medical Guardian™

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT—PRIOR TO AN EMERGENCY

- Have written operating instructions attached to all equipment
- Electrically powered medical equipment
 - Check with your medical supply company regarding information for backup power
- Oxygen and breathing equipment
 - Notify your local utility/fire and police departments that you have oxygen in your home
 - Keep your five-hour emergency backup oxygen supply only for emergency use
 - When your electricity goes out, notify the oxygen provider so they can deliver more tanks
- Intravenous (IV) and feeding equipment
 - Know if your infusion pump has a battery backup
 - Check with your home care provider about manual infusion techniques

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES RELATED TO SPECIAL NEEDS

- Have backup manual equipment for any electric medical equipment
- Special needs items: glasses, hearing aids, adaptive equipment
- Medications and medical supplies
 - Keep a three- to seven- day supply of medications and medical supplies: bandages, ostomy bags, syringes
 - Carry a medication list: name, dose, frequency and prescribing doctor
 - Keep medications in one location in their original containers

RESOURCES

redcross.org

emergency.cdc.gov

Preparing for Emergencies

KNOW DISASTERS MOST LIKELY TO STRIKE

Floods
Tornadoes
Winter storms
Hot weather
Power outages
Fire

HOW TO GET INFORMATION

Television
Community sirens
Cell phone apps
Radio
Websites
Weather radio

CREATE A DISASTER PLAN

Designate a safe place in your home and designate a meeting place outside of your home
Designate an out-of-area contact person
Plan for pets

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

INSIDE YOUR HOME

First aid kit
Battery/manual-powered radio
Flashlight
Extra batteries
Extra cell phone battery

ITEMS FOR EVACUATION

Blankets/sleeping bags
Clothing change and footwear
Three-day supply of medications
Sanitation supplies
Insurance information
Extra set of keys
Cash and ID card copies

FOODS

Three-day supply of water
Dried foods—
potatoes, fruit, crackers, powdered milk
Peanut butter
Canned foods—
meat, soup, juice, fruit, vegetables, fish
Jelly
Hard candy
Nuts
Dry, ready-to-eat cereal

IF INSTRUCTED TO EVACUATE

Turn off utilities, as directed
Take emergency supplies
Notify your out-of-area contact
Notify local authorities or the American Red Cross once you are safe
Phone lines may be busy; try texting
Find assistance through media/local government

PREPARE YOUR HOME

Have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors/check the batteries and learn how to shut them off
Locate electric fuse box, water and gas lines
Keep emergency numbers near the phone, including neighbors who may need help
Have ABC-rated fire extinguisher
Have two escape routes within your home
Practice your emergency plan

OTHER RESOURCES

redcross.org
fema.gov
emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness

Weather Precautions

HOT WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

- Drink plenty of fluids unless medically contraindicated; avoid caffeine and alcohol
- NEVER leave a person or pet in a parked vehicle
- If you think you might need help, arrange to have a family member, friend or neighbor check on you at least twice daily in extreme heat
- Cover windows receiving morning or afternoon sun
- If outdoors, wear light-colored clothing, a hat and sun block
- At the first sign of heat illness, move to a cooler location, rest and slowly drink cool beverages (signs of heat problems include dizziness, nausea, headache and muscle cramps)
- Stay in the basement or lowest floor, out of the sun, if you have no air conditioning
- Call the local village to find a cooling center, if needed
- Get information at [cdc.gov/extremeheat/seniors.html](https://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/seniors.html)

FLOOD PRECAUTIONS

- Have an evacuation plan in place
- Keep emergency numbers next to the phone
- Ensure that you have backup sump pump power
- Have rubber boots or sturdy shoes ready
- If in a car, avoid flooded roads
- If water treatment facilities flood, do not use contaminated water to wash dishes or your body, prepare food or make ice
- Get information at [redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library](https://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library)

WINTER STORM PRECAUTIONS

- Listen to radio or television for forecast information
- Weatherproof your home ahead of time
- Have appropriate cold-weather clothing
- Make sure your heating source, furnace or fireplace is working
- Keep rock salt or sand to use for traction on ice
- Eat regularly—calories maintain body heat
- Do not overexert yourself if shoveling snow; hire a snow removal service if necessary
- Watch for signs of frostbite or hypothermia, which include disorientation, drowsiness and uncontrolled shivering
- Do not drive during a winter storm unless absolutely necessary; if you must drive, stay on main roads
- Call the local village to find a warming center if needed
- Get information at [redcross.org/prepare/disaster/winter-storm](https://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/winter-storm)

Power Outages

Power outages can cause a number of safety concerns. Knowing the following information can help.

BEFORE A POWER OUTAGE

- Register life-sustaining medical equipment with your utility company and local authorities
- Make sure that your cell phone is fully charged, on and available; also, if possible, have a corded phone (land line) available
- Make sure your disaster preparedness kit contains light sticks, flashlights, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries and a wind-up clock
- Have a safe alternative heat source and supply of fuel
- Have enough food, groceries and medical supplies for three to five days

DURING A POWER OUTAGE

- Turn off lights and electrical appliances except for the refrigerator and freezer
- Unplug computers and other sensitive equipment to protect from possible power surges
- Conserve water, especially if you use well water
- Never use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbecues or portable propane heaters for indoor heating—these can cause carbon monoxide poisoning/suffocation
- Stay away from downed power lines and sagging trees with broken limbs
- Hospital beds have a backup battery and/or a hand crank for use
- If using an electrically powered mattress, move to an alternate bed or sofa

KEEP FOOD SAFE

- Use and store food carefully to prevent food-borne illness when refrigeration is unavailable
- Use foods that rapidly spoil first
- Keep doors to refrigerators and freezers closed
- Use an ice chest packed with ice or snow to keep food cold
- Never taste suspect food, even if the food looks and smells fine; illness-causing bacteria may be present

Fire Safety Tips

For Seniors and Disabled Persons

BE PREPARED

- Install a smoke detector on every level of your home
- Check smoke alarms monthly and change batteries twice a year
- Plan your escape route that includes two safe exits from each room
- Keep your slippers, glasses and flashlight by your bed at night so you will be prepared to exit your home quickly
- Make sure your emergency escape route has any necessary accommodations; e.g., wider doorways or ramps
- Register with local police and/or the fire department as a senior/disabled person
- Purchase and know how to use an ABC-rated fire extinguisher

DURING A FIRE EVENT

- Evacuate as necessary, but never use elevators during a fire emergency
- If unable to use stairs, stay in an area of refuge
- If unable to leave, close the door and wait at the window, waving a sheet or flashlight
- To avoid smoke, stay close to the ground
- Remember, a fire grows very rapidly; every second counts for your escape

KITCHEN CAUTION

- Never leave food unattended on the stove
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves to avoid catching clothes on fire
- Use potholders, not towels, to handle hot pans and dishes
- Never use the oven to heat your home

HEATING HAZARDS

- Never leave portable heaters alone or go to sleep when they are turned on
- Keep everything at least three feet from any heat source
- Never hang clothes near a heater to dry them
- Do not overload electrical outlets or extension cords
- Piles of clothes, papers, etc., are fuel for fire
- Lit candles are a high fire hazard

AVOID SMOKING INDOORS

- If you must smoke indoors, use a large, deep ashtray
- Before emptying an ashtray, leave it on the kitchen counter or in the sink overnight
- Empty the ashtray into a fire-resistant container such as a metal garbage can
- Never smoke while drowsy, when in bed or when oxygen is on

FOR MORE INFORMATION

[redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire)