Preparing for the Unexpected - In Case of an Emergency

Create a plan
• Have a plan ready for any kind of emergency.
• In addition to having an emergency evacuation plan for your home, it’s important to have one for your workplace or your child’s school. Office and school building supervisors can be helpful in developing such plans.
• Carry out a practice drill for different types of emergencies, and treat them as actual events.
• Have a notecard ready with at least two emergency contacts; include name, phone number (including area code) and relationship to the person.
• Program a contact into your cell phone called “In Case of Emergency,” and list the phone number for the individual who you would want to be contacted in case of an emergency; list any other information about that individual or your medical condition in the notes section of that “ICE” contact.
• Put all of your emergency information in a safe place (folder, binder) to ensure quick access to important information during an emergency.
• Explore options to upload your medical records onto a Web-based platform that can be accessed from anywhere.

- Tips to follow:
  - Create advanced evacuation and emergency plans, and be sure to involve a few close friends, colleagues and co-workers in your planning.
  - Stay informed when weather events are forecasted, and allow yourself ample time to prepare.
  - Know the emergency plan for your workplace, home, school facility or any other place that you frequent often.

- Numbers to know:
  - 911
  - Local fire department
  - Local police or law enforcement
  - Nearby hospital where you prefer to receive care in the event of a medical emergency
  - Paratransit taxi company
  - General practitioner, neurologist, physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist
  - Health Care Service Coordinator at your local MDA office
  - Your supervisor at your place of employment
  - Poison Control
  - Animal Control (if you have a service animal)
  - Reliable tow truck company (if you own a vehicle)
  - Car insurance carrier/broker
  - 1-800-FightMD

  - If called from a landline, this number will route you to the nearest MDA office.
  - The number is helpful in cases where you have had to evacuate your local area of residence. If you call MDA’s 1-800 number, you will be routed you to the nearest MDA office and provided with someone who can help you access MDA’s equipment loan program. You will be connected with the nearest MDA clinic, where someone can help provide any other information and services you may need. Remember, once you are registered with MDA in one place; you are registered with MDA everywhere.

- Tips for early preparation
  - Have an updated list of medications with names and dosages. Put the information on an index card or an electronic device/smartphone so it is easy to have with you at all times, and can be accessed easily in case of an emergency.
Keep with you contact information for trusted family and friends who can assist you in an emergency. Make sure they have a key to your home.

- Always keep your cell phone ready and charged. Strongly consider keeping a landline active at your home as a backup for communication.
- Find out what to do if your primary care doctor is not available. Have a backup action plan with another doctor.
- Make a specific plan with your MDA clinic physician and team for medical emergencies that take place during nights and weekends.

- If you utilize respiratory or feeding equipment, contact your local power company to be placed on their "priority list." This allows the power company and other response teams in the area to know that you need assistance first due to your medical condition/equipment in the event of a power outage. Many families also develop a relationship with their local fire department so that local emergency personnel are familiar with those in the neighborhood prior to an emergency or power outage.

- Familiarize yourself with your state’s Office of Emergency Management plans of action. Each plan is different and depends on many factors, including the severity of the emergency, but it is good to know so you can coordinate your plan accordingly.

- Arrange furniture so one can maneuver easily throughout the facility.

- Make sure you have instructions ready that are specific to your condition.

**Family emergency plan**

Emergency Supply Kits should be kept wherever you would anticipate evacuating to, including your basement, garage, office, car, etc. Here's what you need:

- Extra supply of medication
- List of model and serial number of all medical devices used
- Patch kit to repair flat tires on your wheelchair
- Flashlight
- Whistle
- Radio
- First aid kit
- Extra clothes and food
- If you have a service animal, food and supplies for your service animal will be needed, as well.

**Emergency shelter**

Under the Americans with Disability Act those with mobility disabilities have the right to stay at public shelters. While shelter placement depends on the emergency, it is good to check out previous shelters and see if they are accessible or not; that way you can come up with a plan either way.

If you are ordered to evacuate your home, the ideal situation would be to have your personal care attendant or family member accompany you to the shelter. If this is not possible, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has recently contracted two organizations — Dynamic Service Solutions and ResCare — to provide personal care attendants in emergency shelters.

What you need to know:

- The emergency shelter manager is the only individual who can request a personal care attendant for you during your time at the shelter.
- Personal care attendants at the shelters will be able to provide assistance with grooming, feeding and bathing. They also can provide medical care, including administering medications and changing dressings.

**Other emergency preparations**

It is vital that you wear a medical ID bracelet so that you can receive proper medical treatment. The bracelet should include your name, condition and medications. It's also important to have other information readily
available: a listing of your medications and dosage; medical allergies/allergies to medications; medical instructions from your doctor; and durable medical power of attorney documents.

For additional references visit us on mda.org/Tips_for_Success