

Caregiver Assistance News

"Caring for You - Caring for Others"

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike,
Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



JUNE 2015

Natural Disasters - Stay at Home or Evacuate

Planning ahead and *preparing* for the worst-case scenario are the best ways to stay safe before a disaster hits. During and after an emergency, it is important to stay calm. Even after an event, there may still be many dangers. Stay tuned to your local emergency station and follow the advice of trained professionals. While there are many things to plan for, your response to all of them is one of two things: stay at home or evacuate. Whenever possible, staying at home in your own environment and with your own emergency supplies is the best choice. Unless told to evacuate, avoid roads to allow emergency vehicles access. What you do next can save your life and the lives of others.



- **Remain calm** and assist the person in your care who may be vulnerable if exposed to extreme heat or cold.
- **Locate a flashlight** with batteries to use until power comes back on. Do not use candles, which can cause a fire.
- **Turn off major electrical and gas appliances** that were on when the power went off. This will help to prevent power surges when electricity is restored.
- **Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed** as much as possible to keep in cold.
- **Do not use the kitchen stove to heat the home** - this can cause a fire or fatal gas leak.
- **Flooding.** People impacted by flooding or power failure from a storm should take precautions to maintain personal hygiene and avoid disease and injury. People with compromised immune systems, including those who are on chemotherapy or are HIV positive, and living in the affected areas should be extremely cautious and consume only commercial bottled water.
- **Use extreme caution when driving.** If traffic signals are out, treat each signal as a stop sign. Come to a complete stop at every intersection and look before you proceed.
- **Do not call 911 to ask about a power outage.** Use a battery-operated radio to listen to news.

A Personal Support Network

The best way to prepare is to establish a local **personal support network**, made up of individuals who will check on the person in your care in an emergency and give assistance if needed. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies. Also, choose an out-of-town family contact, and make sure that everyone in your family knows who this person is and their phone number.

Emergency Supplies Kit

Think through the things you use on a daily basis. Keep a checklist so you don't forget an important item.

- List of prescription **medications**, dosage, and allergies. Also include at least a one week supply of medications. Plan for medications that require refrigeration.
- Extra **eyeglasses** and hearing-aid batteries, **wheelchair batteries** or other special equipment; label wheelchairs, canes and walkers.
- A list of the style and **serial numbers of medical devices**, such as pacemakers.
- Copies of medical **insurance and Medicare cards**.
- **List of doctors and emergency contacts**.
- Flashlight, battery-operated radio, fresh batteries, extra blankets, a manual can opener, eating utensils and a whistle. Cell phone and charger, in case there is still electricity.
- **Water** - One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation. If you live in a warm weather climate, more water may be necessary. **Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person.**
- **Food** - Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water such as **ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables** and foods or special diets.
- **Personal sanitation** - Moist wipes, hand sanitizer, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation and incontinence supplies. Bring extra clothing.



Property Maintenance Before Disaster Strikes

- Strong Winds - Remove dead trees or branches on your property.
- Tornadoes - Consider building a reinforced "safe room" or underground shelter.
- Wildfires - Trim brush to create a buffer zone of at least 30 feet around the house to stop the flames.
- Hurricane - Put up shutters or plywood that's been cut to fit each window and glass door.
- Floods or Heavy Rain - Clear all exterior drains, clear gutters, and make sure the sump pump works, if you have them.



"There are some things you learn best in calm, and some in a storm."

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Small Changes in Lifestyle Impact Your Overall Health

Your overall health does not always depend on costly food supplements, medicines, gym memberships or other grand efforts. Health experts agree that simple life changes can have a significant impact on your health, and these include:

- Maintain oral health by flossing your teeth more often.
- To keep you feeling full and not hungry all the time, eat frequent, small meals rather than binge eating. Remember to eat slowly.
- Have coffee at home and avoid the costly and calorie-laden whipped cream and donuts in coffee shops.
- Wear a pedometer and aim for at least 2,000 steps a day if you are a beginner.



Have a Falls-Free Summer

The ice and snow of winter are now just a memory, but that doesn't mean it's time to let your guard down regarding falls prevention. Here are some healthy habits you can adopt today to help you and your loved ones stay on your feet all summer long:

- Loose clothing is cooler, but be sure baggy items aren't so loose that they could trip you or catch on nearby objects.
- Wear sunglasses or a hat to reduce glare from the sun while outdoors.
- Stop and give eyeglasses that become tinted in the sun time to transition to clear indoors before moving around.
- Trade sandals and flip-flops for walking shoes that fit well and give you proper support when walking.
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dizziness and fainting from dehydration.
- Keep fans and extension cords out of walkways, and pick up any papers or objects that are blown on the floor by fans or open windows right away.
- Keep flashlights near your bed, in the kitchen, and next to your favorite chair to make sure you have one handy if the lights go out.
- Don't walk through water, mud or debris in outdoor walkways.
- Make sure rugs to catch rain and mud are secured to the floor.



The STEADY U Ohio initiative wishes you a safe and happy summer. For more tips and resources to prevent falls year-round, visit www.steadyu.ohio.gov.

Plan for Power Outages Before They Happen

If, because of medical equipment, you cannot be without power, plan for how you will have power backup. If possible, have a backup battery, generator or alternate electrical resources. Purchase extra batteries for motorized wheelchairs or other battery-operated medical or assistive technology devices. Keep the batteries charged at all times. Consider whether you could charge your wheelchair from your car.

Source: Ready.gov

Don't Fall - Be Safe!

Keep your home safe. Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe, and install grab bars in key areas. Store flashlights in easy-to-find places in case of power outages.

Alzheimer's/Dementia Lunch and Learn for Families

July 14th - Scioto County (Best Care Nursing and Rehab Center in Wheelersburg) 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

For more information or to register, or to learn about similar programs, call Melissa Dever with the Alzheimer's Association at (740) 710-1821.



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Safety Tips - *Fire, the Deadliest Threat*

For a person with a mobility disability, no disaster is more frequent - or deadly - than fire. Contact the local fire department for help in evacuation planning, but make sure the advice fits the needs of the person in your care. Besides the usual advice about home fire safety, such as buying and maintaining smoke alarms and fire extinguishers, help the person in your care follow these tips:

- Buy clothing, linens and blankets made of fire-resistant material.
- Arrange furniture so it does not obstruct a quick exit.
- Attach a small ready-to-go bag to the wheelchair or walker.
- Contact support network members to help if they must evacuate a building by a stairway.
- Help memorize a few critical phrases to quickly explain their situation to first responders or write it down.
- Practice the emergency plan regularly.

**Source: *National Organization on Disability www.nod.org; Ready.gov
U.S. Department of Homeland Security; FEMA***

