

Weather and Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults

Have a plan that will allow you to remain in place for at least three days should you be unable to leave your home due to weather conditions or other emergencies:

- **Emergency supplies** – Create an emergency kit that contains: a battery operated radio, a flashlight, extra batteries, a signaling device (such as a loud whistle, horn or bell), food that you can open and prepare easily, water (one gallon per person per day), extra blankets and a first aid kit. Make sure you have access to a phone that will work if the electricity goes out.
- **Medications** – Keep a backup supply of the medications you take every day (check expiration dates every couple of months and replace if necessary). Ask your doctors for extra copies of your prescriptions for your emergency kit. Have an ice chest on hand and keep ice packs in the freezer for medications that need to be kept cool. Keep a backup stash of medical supplies such as bandages, alcohol, etc.
- **Equipment and assistive devices** – Make sure your medical equipment and assistive devices (such as canes, walkers, wheelchairs, lifts, oxygen tanks, etc.) are easy to locate in an emergency. Have spare batteries or non-powered options for any equipment that will not work if there is no electricity. Keep written instructions on how to operate and move your medical and adaptive equipment in your kit.
- **Readiness** – Know where the main valves and switches are for gas, water and electricity, and make sure you can operate them. Have at least one fire extinguisher and know how to use it. Designate a safe place to go (such as a friend or neighbor’s house or shelter) and have a plan for getting there if it becomes unsafe to stay in your home.
- **Reasonable accommodations** – Be prepared to quickly explain to rescue personnel how to move you or help you move safely and rapidly (e.g., “take my oxygen tank,” “get my insulin from the refrigerator”).
- **Safety net** - Ask a reliable family member, friend or neighbor to visit or call you in the event of severe weather or other emergency to make sure you are okay. Agree on a plan for what they should do if they are unable to reach you or find you needing help.

(Adapted from “Emergency Management Be-Prepared Kit,” available at www.disabilityrightsohio.org)

Check on your neighbors

For a variety of reasons, older friends and relatives may have a harder time adjusting during extreme conditions than younger people do. If severe weather is forecasted or has just occurred, check in on older friends and family members to ensure that they are okay and that they have the resources they need to stay safe and healthy.

Do a risk assessment:

- Do they need medical attention?
- Do they have safe food and water?
- Is the temperature in their home comfortable?
- Who will they call if they need help?



STEADY U Ohio is a statewide initiative to prevent falls among older adults. Take a falls risk self-assessment, sign up for news and resources, interact on Facebook and Twitter and get a variety of falls-prevention tips.

www.steadyu.ohio.gov