



How to Prepare for an Emergency or Disaster When You Have Lung Disease

If I have a lung disease, am I at more risk during an emergency or disaster?

If you have lung disease, there is a good chance that you will be at increased risk during an emergency or disaster. This risk will vary depending on the type of lung disease you have. Your increased risk can be from a loss of access to: health care, medication refills, electrical power, and/or an oxygen supply. Local officials try to plan to provide special services for everyone that is at increased risk. These individuals are described as having “special needs” or a “vulnerable” population. You may be included in this group if you are elderly, have a chronic disease like lung disease, or do not speak English. Your local officials may or may not have prepared for your specialized care and needs, depending on where you live. Therefore, *your* planning for an emergency is important.

How can local authorities help me to prepare for an emergency?

A relationship with local authorities and public health providers is helpful in making sure you get the care you need during an emergency. The local authorities include your public health office, the local emergency provider office (such as an emergency agency or fire department), and your hospital. Contact these individuals before an emergency and find out the following:

- Is there a local or regional plan for oxygen should your local provider be unable to deliver oxygen?
- Is there a local plan for dealing with “vulnerable populations” and contacting them in the event of a disaster? If so, how will you be contacted?
- If you or someone you care for needs a mechanical ventilator, is there a plan for dealing with your/their breathing? Who will provide your care and medical equipment should you no longer be able to stay at home?
- Contact your local power/utility companies and notify them of your critical need for equipment. Complete a power saving or sustaining form with your health

care provider, allowing the company to keep your power supplied until the last possible moment.

What should I have at home to help me in preparing for an emergency?

Everyone should have a basic family emergency plan. This should include: appropriate supplies of medication, food, water, shelter and communications. The following list includes other items that are important to have if you have lung disease.

Equipment

- Keep a list of all your equipment, including settings, type, model and make of equipment, and your supplier, their address and phone number.
- If you use a nebulizer ask your health care provider for an inhaler of the same medication that you can take in the event of a power outage.
- If you use an oxygen concentrator, ask for an emergency oxygen supply that does not require electricity (such as an emergency oxygen tank).
- If there is a power outage, ask how to contact your oxygen supplier in case of an emergency.
- If you use mechanical ventilation, have a home back-up plan in case you have a power outage. This may include a generator, a mask attached to a bag, or advanced plans for transportation to a medical facility.

Medication

- Have with you at all times an up-to-date list of all the medicines you take and why you take them.
- Ask your health care provider for a one month supply of your medicines to keep on hand in case there is a delay in getting refills.

Power Source

- Get on the priority list for having your power restored in case of a power outage.
- Plan for access to electricity if it is no longer available.

Plan to get to a health care facility should your health worsen.

Author:
Irene Permut, MD,
Aditi Satti, MD,
on behalf of the
Terrorism and Inhalation
Disasters Section

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Further Resources

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/portal/site/en/menuitem.d8aaecf214c576bf971e4cf e43181aa0/?vgnnextoid=72c51a53f1c37110VgnVCM100003481a10aRCRD>

FEMA

http://www.fdem-mediacycenter.org/PDF/Family_Disaster_Plan.pdf