**Sharing Information on Disaster Preparedness**

**Definition of Disaster Preparedness:** based upon the Department of Human Services and FEMA, preparedness is defined as a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action in an effort to ensure effective coordination during incident response.

**Types of Disasters: What are some types of emergencies or disasters**? Here are a few: severe storms, earthquakes, severe weather (exposure to heat wave and cold temperatures), poison, radioactive/nuclear exposure, pandemics, floods, landslides, flash floods, fires, loss of power/energy/communication systems, or water.

**Questions: what types of disasters are based upon your living situation?**

**To help you answer the above question, here and below are examples of what I considered for my family in 2021:** I live near a railroad, and there could be a need for my family to evacuate if there was a spillage of chemical and a risk for exposure to poisonous chemicals leaking. I also live in the Pacific NW, so I know that earthquake risk should be considered when decorating, designing, and planning home safety. Additionally, I live on a road that sometimes floods, so I need to know other routes to get home. In 2021, we went 60 days without rain and had temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, placing our area at risk of fire, and this winter, and had temperatures as low as 10 degrees Fahrenheit and compact snow and ice for greater than one week. We also have had fire smoke in the summertime, creating stressors on family and friends already with compromised breathing. In 2022 we went without power for 5 days due to local windstorms. We are also living at a time when we learned that a World Pandemic can go beyond 2 years, and it is influenza and cold season as well. Therefore, I would list the ones that would be the highest risk and prioritize developing a plan.

1. **Illness (COVID & Influenza)**
2. **Severe Weather (Heat & Cold)**
3. **Poison/Chemical Risk & Need to be prepared to evacuate**
4. **Earthquake**
5. **Flood**

**Current Concepts in Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management:**

Five Steps to Emergency Management:

1. **Prevention:** Vaccination and having a backup medicine supply; teaching others about resources and helping them to access resources. Telling the PUD when you see trees over the lines in your neighborhood. Teaching others about having smoke detectors and helping change the batteries every year when we turn our clocks back or during disaster preparedness month in September. Teach about communication tools: special stickers provided by the Fire Department to go in the windows where their children/physical family member sleeps so fire personnel can readily save lives. Special accounts for people who are physically challenged that if the phone system goes down, they will be prioritized for repair service.
2. **Mitigation:** examples of securing a home with tie downs to prevent damage during an earthquake and channeling water away from my home/shelter on my property. Knowing how to care for the safety of animals.
3. **Preparedness:** Developing a plan and practicing
4. **Response:** Taking action to protect yourself, neighbors, and community immediately after the event such as staying informed of the dangers or potential threats such as power lines down. Checking in on your neighbor or elderly/physical challenged community members.
5. **Recovery:** Helping friends and families. Prevent other illness or stressors on humanity such as poverty or social & economic burdens/challenges

**Survival Kits** (there are many online that people can find by going to FEMA or the Red Cross)

Here are my recommendations as a nurse and caregiver of an elderly physically challenged loved one. I recommend each person individualize this for their situation and number of people (and developmental age and care needs of the people in their home; example it would be different for a young couple with 3 children in diapers or for a home that supports caring for livestock, animals, and pets).

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| **Emergency Supply Cupboard/Closet/Space** | **Quantity (these are examples only)** |
| Disaster Plan & Emergency contact list and calendar checklist on clipboard/phone tree/evacuation plan and routes & accessible Hotels within 50 miles that have accessible accommodations for a power wheelchair on the first floor to avoid the risk of being dependent on an elevator for evacuation during a full community power outage. | 1 |
| A good stocked First Aid Kit to include emergency medicine consider adding a suction bulb to your First Aide Kit, as I have used this in emergencies so often in clinic and in the home to help with multiple needs. | 1 |
| Outdoor Heavy Duty Garbage Bags & kitchen garbage bags | 1 box of 20/each size |
| Duct Tape & electrical tape | 1 Roll of each |
| Protective Equipment N95, surgical mask, 4 boxes disposable gloves, eye shields, old clothing such as washable gowns or sweaters/disposable gowns | Depending on the level of support/need |
| Extra Blankets & old sheets | 4 of each |
| Wipes for hand hygiene & care | 12 gallons |
| Water Distilled for BiPap/C-Pap | 6 gallons |
| Water Drinking (one gallon per day per person) water does expire, so management is important | 60 gallons |
| Food easy to prepare (peanut and pumpkin seed butter, crackers, canned fruits and meals, healthy protein bars, juices, etc.) Remember a hand crank can opener is needed if you are going to use canned items as your emergency supply. I also recommend salt as it can be used for so many things including making homemade saline if needed to clean wounds. | 60 days |
| Flashlight & batteries (lanterns are great to have one for the kitchen and bathroom and a flashlight for the car) | 4 |
| Battery hand crank radio (great gift to give 😊) | 1 |
| Multipurpose safety tool (this is also a great gift to give someone) | 1 |
| Copies of your personal documents, including medication list and proof of address, deed, passport, birth certificates, and insurance policies | 1 |
| Cell phone charger | 2 |
| Extra cash and change for vending machines | 60-day supply of cash |
| Map of the area | 2 |
| Extra car keys | 2 |
| Pet Supply | To be determined |
| Child/Baby/Adult incontinent products to manage bowel and bladder needs | 6 cases |
| Disposable dishes, dixie cups, straws, and utensils | 60 days |
| List any camping items as resources such as ice chest, tents, and sleeping bags |  |

Make a separate emergency supply pack for your vehicle and check on it when you wash your car & replace items that are due to expire in the First Aid Kit such as Benadryl.

**Consider your energy resources:** generator, batteries, solar, propane, gasoline, oil, wood/paper, etc. and matches as this was a huge concern when I lived up in the mountains for over 6 years far from any neighbors. Candles also were a significant help for me to preserve my batteries at times as well as my oil lanterns when it would snow and due to the region was in a rural area power was not restored for days to weeks.

**Resources to learn more about how to develop a plan to be prepared and protect the ones you love include the following:**

[**https://www.ready.gov/videos**](https://www.ready.gov/videos)

[**https://www.dhs.gov/plan-and-prepare-disasters**](https://www.dhs.gov/plan-and-prepare-disasters)

[**https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html**](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html)

[**https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/downloads/is111\_unit%204.pdf**](https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/downloads/is111_unit%204.pdf)

**Words of knowledge and wisdom were shared with me during an Employee All Staff Meeting presented by the Emergency & Disaster Official for Mount Vernon, WA, in 2017. Here are the following highlights.**

1. Remember that as an individual, you need your own plan. The county will try to keep the heart of the community's health safe and operational, such as hospitals. If there was a major disaster like an earthquake with significant magnitude, it may be 60 days before you could receive support. He recommended that individuals create a 60-day plan, not a 3-day plan, which was the prior standard.
2. He recommended considering things/resources such as large dark garbage bags to be included in our emergency kits because garbage bags could be used for many things including anticipating late garbage pick-up, so he recommended having 60 supplies available. Additionally, they can be used as rain ponchos, collection containers for rainwater, cover a broken window to keep wind and rain out, or even block sunlight if it is hot.
3. He also recommended saving our old blankets and sheets to use as tools to help move people, use as insulation, and consider a place to store emergency items in your home.
4. Have a plan, put it in writing, and develop it with your circle of support so everyone knows it and has a copy. Remember, there may not even be fax machines, telephone communication, or even the internet during a disaster, so a written plan is the best. Keep it in the emergency supply storage so you always know where to find it to guide you during a highly stressful time when you might feel overwhelmed and lost.
5. Encourage friends and family to be CPR trained so they can help each other.