

STORM SAFETY

It is that time of year again to prepare for storm season. One area of preparedness that many people forget about is how to care for the elderly in the storm season.

The elderly are very uncertain of changes and many become very confused during the power outages and the lack of services that become unavailable during storms. One way to help you with caring for your elder during a storm is to be prepared.

Here are some helpful hints for you to consider:

1. Stock up on incontinent supplies such as adult diapers, baby wipes (you can use these for yourself too), gloves, and other personal care supplies.
2. Have a month's supply of your elder's medications on hand.
3. Be sure to have a lantern type light and batteries. These lights provide more room lighting like they are used to having and they don't have to carry them in their hands which may interfere with canes and walkers.
4. Buy some Ensure or other type of dietary supplement. These are great because they are non-perishable and provide a lot of vitamins which they may need due to the extra stress of the situation.
5. Register your elder with the local authorities. For example, in the Houston, TX area there is a Houston-Harris County 211 Special Needs Transportation Registry. Call the specified phone number to register your elder. This service is designed so the Officials know about the special needs of your elder and can provide assistance if needed. Many areas of the country have these types of registries.
6. Locate businesses your elder may need during an emergency (such as dialysis treatment centers, oxygen supply companies, etc) and find out their emergency plan if they have no power to serve your elder. You want to have a back up plan.
7. Remember that power scooters and wheelchairs need power to operate so you may want to get a back up regular wheelchair for your elder.
8. Don't forget some form of entertainment such as cards or board games. These are a great way to occupy your elder so they forget about the storm for a while.

Of course the items listed above are in addition to your regular hurricane supplies such as food, water, batteries, flashlights, battery operated radio or TV, cash, first aid kit, and other essential items that your family may need during a storm.

Always remember that your elder may be confused during times that are out of the ordinary. Hurricanes, tornados and winter storms certainly can be classified as not normal. Be compassionate and understanding that they too are disoriented by not having any electricity and are confused by the raging storm. Be sure to include them in any updates that you have about the storm so they know what is happening. Keep in mind your elder is just as interested in the information that is coming out on the radio as you are.