

Caring for Elders during an Emergency

The health of older adults may decline during emergencies due to multiple factors. Older adults often have more chronic conditions than other age groups, the treatment of which may require daily medications, specialized equipment, and care coordination. Sensory, physiological, and cognitive changes that may occur in the normal course of aging can also make it more difficult for older adults to cope with disaster situations such as extreme temperatures or noisy, crowded shelters. Understanding potential older adult health and medical concerns is essential in order to appropriately plan for these issues before an emergency event.

Prepare NOW

Emergencies can be disruptive to everyone's life, but in the case of senior citizens, they may turn dangerous. By following these simple steps, you can help ensure your loved ones stay safe, no matter what Mother Nature sends their way.

- Make sure their supplies are well-stocked. This includes both food and prescriptions they may need.
- Inspect the house. Start by identifying potential hazards such as dead tree limbs, outside plumbing that's missing insulation, and debris in the gutters. Continue to inspect the outside furnace vents, ensuring that they are clear.
- Arrange for Care. Contact someone ahead of time to clear the driveway and sidewalk. One of the neighbors may be willing to check in on your relative, and let you know they are still doing okay.
- Have a back-up plan in case the power goes out. If your relative uses an oxygen concentrator or a CPAP machine, it's always a good idea to have a generator at their home to help the machines to continue on in the event of a power outage. Make sure your loved one has working flashlights and plenty of batteries.
- Learn the signs of, and basic treatments for, frostbite and hypothermia.



KENDALL COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT