

## Disaster Planning Tips for Senior Adults<sup>1</sup>

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| Disaster Planning Topics                                                                         | Special Tips for Senior Adults                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Water – 1 gallon/person/day.<br>Store at least 3 days worth.                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dehydration is a serious health problem for older adults. Store more than the recommended amount.</li> <li>Gallon jugs of water are heavy. Use containers that are small enough to easily handle.</li> <li>Be certain that the caps are easily removable in spite of arthritis.</li> <li>Store extra water if you have pets.</li> <li>Water in swimming pools and spas can be used for sanitation and person hygiene.</li> </ul> |
| Food –store 3-day supply of non-perishable food.                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider special dietary needs.</li> <li>Have a manual can opener that you can use.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| First Aid Kit –one for home and one for the car                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add anything different that you might need.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Non-prescription drugs – include pain relief, stomach medicine, and poison response drugs.       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep several day's worth of all vitamins and supplements that that you use daily. Withdrawal of some supplements can be a serious problem.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Contacts -to notify in an emergency                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All doctors names, phone numbers, addresses and what they treat you for (i.e. cardiologist)</li> <li>In-town relatives or close friends (all phone numbers)</li> <li>Out-of town relatives or close friends (all phone numbers)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Important papers – insurance, birth/death certificates, bank account and credit card information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>And, Medicare and/or Medicaid cards</li> <li>Living will and medical power of attorney</li> <li>Veteran's papers</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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| <b>Disaster Planning Topics</b>                                                                                                | <b>Special Tips for Senior Adults</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Time passers –board games, puzzles, books, paper and pens for letters and notes, envelopes and stamps, playing cards           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paperback books weigh less than hardcover</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Medical Needs –first aid kit, extra glasses, names of doctors, information about prescription medications                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also, extra hearing aid batteries</li> <li>• Wheel chair batteries</li> <li>• List of serial numbers and styles of medical devises (i.e. pacemakers).</li> <li>• Information on all prescription drugs-dosage, directions, interactions, refill dates.</li> <li>• Minimum 2 week supply of all essential medications</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| People with special needs                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alzheimer’s Victims               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Register with local police/fire departments</li> <li>○ ID bracelet or necklace</li> <li>○ Instructions for reaching family member, friends, physician</li> <li>○ Information about special or peculiar behaviors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Diabetics               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Special dietary foods</li> <li>○ Testing supplies</li> <li>○ Emergency insulin supplies that do not require refrigeration</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Bed-Bound Persons               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emergency transportation plan</li> <li>○ Supplies of daily care items –bed pads, adult diapers, linens</li> <li>○ Dietary needs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Oxygen Dependent               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Oxygen supplies (including alternate power source –such as battery).</li> <li>○ Extra water for oxygen condensers</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Emotional Support/ Stress Reduction- Special pictures, spiritual support, comfort food, addresses and phone numbers of friends | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a journal about your experience.</li> <li>• Form informal ‘support group’ to share concerns and information.</li> <li>• Write letters to your grandchildren or other family and friends.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Evacuation or move to shelter                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider backpacks to put supplies in if you must evacuate or move to a shelter</li> <li>• Prearrange transportation with neighbors</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

**References:****Psychosocial Issues for Older Adults in Disasters**

DHHS Publication No. ESDRB SMA 99-3323

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Mental Health Services**Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors**Available from your local chapter of the American Red Cross, or online at  
<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/seniors.html>