

Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home®

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Storms - Stay Safe When the Power Goes Out

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) more than 400 people die from *carbon monoxide poisoning* each year, with some fatalities having occurred during severe weather when people use substitute or improvised sources of power. But the CDC says carbon monoxide poisoning is “entirely preventable.”

Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector on each level of the home. Carbon monoxide, which is odorless and colorless, is produced by appliances that burn gas, oil, kerosene, wood or wood products. Early symptoms of poisoning include headache, weakness, dizziness and nausea, but it can go undetected if you're asleep. The C.D.C. recommends checking batteries on your devices each spring and fall.

Use a generator only outdoors, more than 20 feet away from your home. *Never* use a generator, gasoline-powered engine, camp stove or charcoal-burning device in a confined or semi-confined space, such as your home, basement or garage. Remember that opening doors and windows, and using fans, will *not* prevent carbon monoxide from building up.

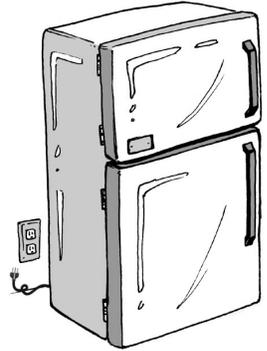
Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges or spikes when power returns. Keep refrigerators and freezers closed — refrigerators will keep food cold for about four hours, and freezers will keep food cold for about 48 hours. If power is out for

more than a day, throw out any medication that requires refrigeration.

After An Emergency

Do not call 911 to ask about a power outage. In case of a power outage, use battery-operated equipment to listen to news and radio stations for updates. During and after an emergency, it is important to stay calm. Even after an event, there may still be many dangers. Stay tuned to your local emergency station and follow the advice of trained professionals. Unless told to evacuate, avoid roads to allow emergency vehicles access. What you do next can save your life and the lives of others.

- Assist the person in your care who may be vulnerable if exposed to extreme heat or cold.
- Locate a flashlight with batteries to use until power comes back on. *Do not* use candles—this can cause a fire.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep in cold.
- *Do not use the kitchen stove to heat your home*—this can cause a fire or fatal gas leak.
- Use extreme caution when driving. If traffic signals are out, treat each signal as a stop sign—come to a complete stop at every intersection and look before you proceed.



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Establishing a Personal Support Network

The best way to prepare is to establish a *personal support network*. A personal support network is made up of individuals who will check with the person in your care in an emergency to ensure he or she is fine and to give assistance if needed. As a caregiver, you could be responsible for food supplies and preparation and ensuring she has the supplies on hand that are needed.

The *elderly* and *persons with disabilities* need the same planning as everyone else, and sometimes a little more, to be prepared for an emergency.

You can help the person in your care to:

- Plan how you will evacuate or signal for help.
- Plan emergency procedures with home care agencies or workers.
- Tell others where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach others how to operate necessary equipment.
- Label equipment like wheelchairs, canes or walkers.

Emergency Supplies

- ✓ List of prescription **medications** including dosage in the supply kit; include any allergies.
- ✓ Extra **eyeglasses** and hearing-aid batteries.
- ✓ Extra **wheelchair batteries** or other special equipment.
- ✓ A list of the style and **serial numbers of medical devices** such as pacemakers.
- ✓ Copies of medical **insurance and Medicare cards**.
- ✓ **List of doctors and emergency contacts**.
- ✓ Flashlight, battery-operated radio, fresh batteries, extra blankets, a manual can opener.



✓ **Water**

One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation. If you live in a warm weather climate more water may be necessary. Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person.

Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles.

✓ **Food**

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water such as ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables.

Pack a manual can opener and eating utensils.

NOTE Ready.gov has a guide in several languages on how to make a plan for disasters.

Taking Care of Yourself— Taking Care of You Helps Two

Appreciate Your Own Efforts Give yourself credit for what you are contributing to the life of the person in your care. Avoid unrealistic expectations of the person in your care, and friends and family who assist you.

Watch Your Physical Health Keep track of your own physical well-being. Get a minimum of six hours sleep. Eat nutritious food. Exercise a little everyday. Stop smoking and avoid using alcohol as an escape from boredom or stress. Get regular physical check-ups. Be sure your doctor knows about your caregiving responsibilities.

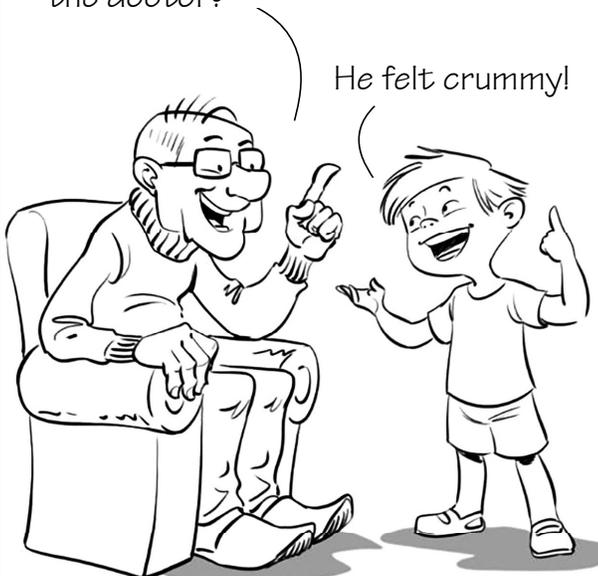
Relaxation and Stress Release Learn a quick relaxation and self-affirmation exercise. Try breathing and picturing yourself in a calm, peaceful place. Practice relaxing daily.



Live Life Laughing!

Why did the cookie visit the doctor?

He felt crummy!



Inspiration

Marge, it takes two to lie. One to lie and one to listen.

— Homer Simpson

Memory Care – Safety Changes

If you are making safety changes to a home in which you do not live, your parent's or client's home, for example, be aware and sensitive to what these possessions mean to the elderly person and proceed with sensitivity.

Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

Ordering Info

From the publishers of

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SAFETY TIPS – Gas Leaks

Natural Gas Natural gas leaks and explosions are responsible for a significant number of fires following disasters. **It is vital that all household members know how to shut off natural gas.** Because there are different gas shut-off procedures for different gas meter configurations, it is important to contact your local gas company for guidance on preparation and response regarding gas appliances and gas service to your home.

When you learn the proper shut-off procedure for your meter, share the information with everyone in your household. Be sure *not* to actually turn off the gas when practicing the proper gas shut-off procedure.

If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out quickly. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home.

CAUTION – If you turn off the gas for any reason, a **qualified professional must turn it back on.** NEVER attempt to turn the gas back on yourself.

Source: www.ready.gov/safety-skills