

Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities

Tips For People With Environmental or Chemical Sensitivities

Emergency Supplies

- Collect emergency supplies based on your worst days. Following a major disaster, an excess of smoke, excessive dust, molds, gas leaks, diesel from idling rescue vehicles, flashing lights, radio waves, electromagnetic fields (from generators, emergency lights, cellular phones, walkie talkies) and airborne toxins may trigger stronger reactions than you normally experience.

"Carry-With-You" Supplies to Keep with You at All Times

- Your emergency health information card. This should clearly explain your sensitivities, reactions, most effective treatments, and treatments which are harmful to you. Be specific, as environmental illness is not commonly understood. Remember that some reactions (disorientation, aphasia, panic) may be diagnosed and treated as something other than chemical sensitivity and you may not be able to describe your needs verbally.
- Medications including inhalers, epinephrine shots and anticonvulsant.
- Prescriptions and treatment authorization requests (T.A.R.s) from your doctor for unusual, orphan or hard-to-find medications.
- Supplements, herbs and homeopathic remedies.

Additions to Your Standard First Aid Kit

- Cotton bandages, gauze and paper tape.
- Hydrogen peroxide, zephiran chloride or your tolerated disinfectant.

Emergency Supplies

- Charcoal mask and/or respirator.
- Well aired-out (outgassed) plastic or steel tubing and ceramic mask or outgassed plastic mask for oxygen.
- Rolls of aluminum foil for covering chairs, your sleeping area, food, etc.
- Baking soda, stored in a waterproof container (for washing).
- Food that requires no cooking.
- Water. If storage in glass containers is necessary, consider using one quart bottles, stored inside layers of thick socks to protect the glass and enable carrying. Note: glass bottles will break if the water freezes and expands.
- A portable charcoal water filter.
- Before purchasing a fire extinguisher, find out about your sensitivity to the contents.

Evacuation Plan

- Know where the nearest safe places are, especially open air places, such as a beach upwind from traffic, refineries and fires.
- Avoid hermetically sealed shelters.

Checklist

- _____ Collect emergency supplies based on your worst days.
- _____ Collect "carry-with-you" supplies to keep with you at all times.
- _____ Make special additions to your emergency supplies as needed.
- _____ In case of evacuation, know where the nearest safe places are away from your home.

Excerpted from:

Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco
(<http://www.ilrcsf.org/resources/publications.shtml>)