



# Network

## Consumer News

**LARGE PRINT VERSION**

### Be A Survivor

Emergencies caused by severe weather or disasters can happen with or without warning. If you need dialysis, not having power, water, transportation or supplies may become a life threatening situation. Some emergency situations may make it impossible for you to get dialysis at your clinic or at home.

It is important for all people to be prepared for severe weather or disasters – but for a kidney patient it is critical.

Most times, the weather we deal with everyday is more or less predictable. However, there is a possibility every single day for the weather to turn or for a disaster to occur.

Disasters come in all forms including earthquakes, landslides, floods, forest fires, and gas shortages. It is important to remember:

*“An emergency stops being one when you are prepared.”*

The time is now. If you need a reminder why emergency preparation is important, you need only think back to the last couple of winters – and how it has affected thousands of kidney patients.

In Washington and Oregon alone, the area has struggled with record flooding and snow falls, prolonged power outages and significant disruptions in transportation.

Today is the day to review what you have in place and take action on what you still need to do. Remember, you may not be able to rely on 911 or emergency personnel for help in a disaster. You may be on your own for a period of time.

Here are some items to get you started:

- ✓ Have you considered a few different ways out of your house, your neighborhood or your town, in case the way is blocked?
- ✓ Do you have a copy of the Emergency Renal Diet? It is advised that you start the diet as soon as the emergency situation is predicted for your area. This may help you if you are delayed in getting your next regular dialysis treatment. Ask your dialysis clinic for a copy of the diet or contact Northwest Renal Network for a copy.
- ✓ Do you have all of your emergency phone numbers, medication lists, and other important information in one central place? Put them in a water-proof container like a sandwich bag or a screw-top pill bottle.
- ✓ If you use transportation, have you talked recently to the person or company that provides this service regarding how things will be handled in an emergency?
- ✓ Have you put together an emergency kit containing essential emergency supplies including:
  - Extra medications
  - Three days worth of food
  - Three days worth of water
  - Flashlights with fresh batteries

## **One Person's Recent Experience**

One of our Network dialysis patients spoke to us about his experience at the beginning of this New Year.

Paul is an in-center hemodialysis patient.

Paul thought he was well prepared for an emergency. He lives near other family members. They had helped Paul, who is legally blind, be prepared by making sure that he had extra supplies on hand and had discussed his needs with his transportation company.

Despite these plans, the transportation was unable to reach Paul when the water around his home rose quickly. Paul went on the Emergency Renal Diet and said it worked very well. Following the Emergency Renal Diet gave the dialysis clinic and others enough time to find a way to get him to dialysis.

The experience reminded Paul of his vulnerability as a dialysis patient. During the crisis, he initially felt alone and isolated from help – even though he made it through the situation and got his dialysis the next day.

We cannot know or control everything that can happen in the future. But, we can take steps to be prepared.

If you need assistance in getting prepared, talk with your clinic or contact Northwest Renal Network for additional educational resources.

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## THINGS TO CONSIDER

Dialysis clinics are required by federal regulations to:

- ✓ Develop an emergency preparedness plan
- ✓ Instruct patients and staff about the plan
- ✓ Conduct periodic drills or mock emergencies
- ✓ Have an alternative emergency number(s) for the clinic
- ✓ Teach you how to disconnect from your dialysis machine in an emergency

It is very important that you ask about your clinic's emergency plan. It will not only keep you informed and safe, but should assist the facility in making better preparations as well.

*“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” Benjamin Franklin*

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## LEARNING POINTS

An emergency stops being one **when you are prepared.**

Start the Emergency Renal Diet as soon as the emergency situation is predicted.

You should have alternative emergency numbers.

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## RELATED WEB RESOURCES

American Red Cross

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Northwest Renal Network

[www.nwrenalnetwork.org/E/emergency.htm](http://www.nwrenalnetwork.org/E/emergency.htm)

If you would like the information but do not have access to the Internet, please contact us:

**Northwest Renal Network**

**4702 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW**

**Seattle, WA 98116**

**206.923.0714**

**Fax 206.923.0716**

**Patient**

**Toll-Free Number**

**1.800.262.1514**

**[www.nwrenalnetwork.org](http://www.nwrenalnetwork.org)**

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