

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A PLAN

Every client/patient receiving care or services in the home should think about what they would do in the event of an emergency. Our goal is to help you plan so that we can try to provide you with the best, most consistent service we can during the emergency.

### PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

During storms and outages, stay aware of alerts, warnings and updates from local emergency services. In addition:

- Record your county's police and fire nonemergency phone number and the numbers of any other organization or service that you use or will need.
- Assemble an emergency preparedness kit for your home and vehicle. Contact your local Red Cross for assistance.
- In the event of a power outage, do not assume your device will work properly – review the checklist below to ensure you know how your device will function during a power outage.
- If you are dependent upon electrically run medical equipment, register with the local utility companies prior to a disaster occurring.

### MEDICAL ITEMS/NEEDS

It is important that you take all medications as prescribed and do not interrupt or stop any treatments without your doctor's approval. Doing so may result in a return of your symptoms and progression of your disease. A disaster or emergency situation may make it difficult to continue with your treatment regime. That is why it is so important to plan ahead. In addition to those items previously listed in this manual, the following tips may be helpful in a disaster situation:

#### All Medical Equipment & Supplies:

- Store all of your supplies and parts for your nebulizer or other medical equipment in a plastic container or storage bag next to your equipment. It can be gathered up quickly in case you have to evacuate your home.
- Pack any items needed to properly clean and sanitize your equipment.
- Include a mask or other equipment to minimize your contact with irritants. Disasters can stir up a variety of irritants (smoke, pollen, mold, fumes, etc.).
- Store needed mobility aids (canes, crutches, leg braces, walkers, wheelchairs) close to you in a convenient location. If possible, keep extras in several locations throughout your house.

#### Wheelchair:

- Keep a patch kit or extra inner tubes in your kit.
- Manual wheelchair: Keep a pair of heavy gloves in case you have to wheel over glass or other sharp debris.
- Consider having a lightweight manual wheelchair as a back-up.
- There will be times when you may have to leave your wheelchair in order to evacuate safely. If you cannot use stairs, familiarize yourself and your personal care network with lifting and carrying techniques that work for you. Also, be prepared to give these instructions to rescue workers.
- When preparing your exit plan, make sure more than one exit is wheelchair accessible.

#### Supplemental Oxygen:

- Your home care provider has provided you with an extra oxygen cylinder to be used in cases of emergencies. The size of your extra cylinder will depend on a number of factors, including your liter flow and how easy it is to get you're your home with snow or ice on the ground.
- If you lose power, switch to your extra portable cylinder of oxygen and call your home care provider as soon as possible.
- Try to estimate the time it takes to use an oxygen cylinder. This will help in determining how long your supply will last. Remember, stressful situations may cause you to breathe more quickly, causing your oxygen supply to run down faster.
- If you live in a rural or remote area where there are frequent or long-lasting power outages, you should consider purchasing and installing a generator.
- Have a plan to obtain additional oxygen should your supply run out.
- When using oxygen, try to inhale through your nose (a good idea anyway). Inhaling through your mouth can be very drying, and some of the oxygen may be wasted.
- Pack extra nasal cannulas so they can be changed particularly if the prongs become soiled or uncomfortable. In many places they are free from your suppliers.