

Kidney *Chronicles*

END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORK OF NEW ENGLAND

SEPTEMBER
2015

HELPFUL TIPS
TO EMPOWER
ESRD PATIENTS
AS CONSUMERS



Improving Healthcare
for the Common Good®

September is Emergency Preparedness Awareness Month

We all know how important it is to be ready and prepared for emergency situations. In the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) publication, *Disaster Preparedness: A Guide for Chronic Dialysis Facilities*, an emergency is defined as “a situation requiring help or relief, usually created by an unexpected event.” For dialysis patients living in New England, natural emergencies can include hurricanes, blizzards, flooding, and extreme cold. Additional emergency situations may include terrorist attacks, epidemics, power failures, or fires.

Would you be prepared for one of these emergency situations? IPRO ESRD Network of New England encourages you, as a dialysis patient, to take a more active role in your emergency preparedness planning. It could mean the difference between life and death!

Being prepared is as simple as planning ahead. Here are a few things that you can do to make sure you are safe.

Helpful Steps to Prepare for an Emergency

1. Gather Your Medical Information. To prepare for emergencies, put together all of your medical information, and carry it with you at all times. In the event of an emergency, you may need to be dialyzed at a center or hospital other than the one you always go to; and the medical staff at that facility needs to know about your medical status to ensure that you receive the right treatment.

How the Network Serves You

- Advocates on your behalf;
- Answers your questions about treatment, modality choices or other issues;
- Develops and provides educational materials, i.e., newsletters, for you and your family;
- Works with renal professionals to improve the care provided to you;
- Helps keep you informed and updated to support your involvement in your care and treatment options; and
- Evaluates and resolves grievances.

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- 2. Stock up on Emergency Supplies.** Make sure that you have enough supplies of food, and medicines. Restock every six months.
- 3. Communicate with Your Facility.** You should know the emergency plan of your dialysis center. Make sure you know what to do, where to go, and whom to contact in an emergency. Check with your facility to make sure they have your current contact information so they can reach you in an emergency. It is very important for you to speak with your facility staff about alternate treatment arrangements in the event of an emergency.
- 4. Limit Your Fluid Intake.** According to the CMS booklet, you should limit your fluid intake to two cups of fluid every 24 hours.
- 5. Begin the 3-day Emergency Diet Plan** (see below). If you cannot get dialyzed in the event of an emergency, you must begin the 3-day Emergency Diet immediately in order to prevent fluid and toxic waste build up. Please note this diet plan is not a substitute for dialysis.

What is the 3-day Emergency diet plan?

The 3-day-emergency diet plan is NOT a substitute for dialysis. However, it will help to limit the buildup of waste and fluids during an emergency situation. This diet plan, developed by the Northern California Council on Renal Nutrition, limits the amount of protein, potassium, salt, and fluid intake even more than a regular renal diet.

This diet recommends that patients who are in emergency situations WITHOUT access to dialysis consume **no more than...**

- 40 grams of protein,
- 1,500 mg of sodium, and
- 1,500 mg of potassium per day.

Please note: You should make every attempt to receive dialysis within three days. However, you should continue this diet plan if you cannot make it to your dialysis treatment due to an emergency situation.

**IF YOU NEED IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE AT ANY TIME,
CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR OR DIAL 911.**

To file a grievance, please contact:

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