

BREATHE Easier In Power Outage Emergencies

If you have a respiratory condition and rely on electricity to operate health-sustaining equipment, you are especially at-risk during disasters/emergencies. Power outages can potentially impact your health and in some cases cause death. If you have a chronic illness like COPD, rely on a CPAP machine, or are oxygen dependent, for example, you are strongly encouraged to create an emergency plan -to do so, just B.R.E.A.T.H.E.

Be Proactive – Act Now!

- **Don't wait for an emergency or disaster to happen! Act now on the following suggestions.**
- Call your local power company to explore whether they have a medical equipment registry.

Reserve Medical Supplies

- Keep extra medical equipment/medical supplies (and keep old equipment when getting upgrades) for use in an emergency. Use items periodically and replace if/when needed, ensuring usability.

Establish a Support Team

- Find dependable people (family, friends, co-workers, etc.), in and out of your immediate area, who can help you in an emergency, when necessary. Having out-of-area supports are important in case those closest to you also become impacted by the emergency situation/disaster.

Alternative Power Sources

- It is vital to have back-up power options in place for your equipment in emergency situations.
- Read your medical equipment manual, particularly about alternative power sources. Get a generator to power your equipment and have properly installed by a certified electrician/professional or get support team members with generators.

Talk With Your Home Medical Equipment Provider and Make Plans

Ask your home medical equipment provider about their plans to assist you in emergencies, including short and long-term power outages. Examples of important provider information are:

- Primary and secondary person to call during and/or after an emergency/disaster
- Business phone numbers after business hours emergency numbers)
- After hours emergency phone number
- Out-of-area emergency call center number if local provider is unavailable
- Who to call or where to go for treatment if provider is not available after a disaster
- Any other important information

Home Emergency Supply Kit

- Compile and store at least 3 day's (or more) worth of emergency supplies, e.g., food, water, first aid kit, and include your medical equipment supplies, medication, etc. Visit: <http://www.ready.gov> to learn more about creating an emergency preparedness kit!

Emergency Communication

- Have a back-up plan for emergency communication. During disasters/emergencies, some communication systems may work when others fail. The more systems (email, cell phone, two-way radios, etc.) you have available, the more likely you will be able to contact other people.
- If you have texting capability, it has been documented in some disasters that people were able to get messages through via texting while phone systems were overrun with calls.
- Another inexpensive back-up plan is to have people from your support team automatically contact you in person, if possible, when communication systems are down.