

Disaster Preparedness – *Just in Case*

Severe weather often strikes with little notice. In the recent weeks there has been heightened awareness of natural disasters. From the earthquake in Illinois, flooding in Louisiana, and tornados in Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, and Minnesota we are reminded of the power of nature. “Since we never know where or when a disaster might strike and with the first of June being the start of the hurricane season and the wildfire season, we thought this might be a good time to share a few general safety tips,” said Mary Doepke, Owner of Home Helpers.

- **Watch vs. Warning** – When there are severe weather conditions, the National Weather Service often issues a watch or a warning. A watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather. A warning indicates there is severe weather in the area or is indicated on weather radar. Whenever you hear warning sirens indicating severe weather, move to a designated place within your home for safety.
- **Prepare and Practice** – At the start of each season, take the time to review and run through your safety plans. If you do not already have plans in place, you might:
 - Designate a safe place in the home to take cover in the event of severe weather.
 - Keep a fire extinguisher, weather radio, and flash light in a central location.
 - Identify potential hazards you might want to secure such as outdoor furniture or a gas grill, and services you may wish to shut off such as gas, electric and water to your home.
 - Identify an emergency exit plan should you need to quickly get out of your home.
 - Make sure you know what county you are in and how to call for emergency assistance.
 - Determine how you might meet the unique needs of people who are elderly or disabled.
 - Review your insurance coverage and/or contact your insurance agent to make sure you are covered against earthquakes, fire, flooding, and severe weather.
- **Get Out and Get Away** – With certain types of disasters, people are encouraged or forced to leave their homes. In case you need to get out and get away, you might:
 - Become familiar with evacuation routes and keep a map handy should roads be impassable due to standing water or downed trees.
 - Make sure you have easy and quick access to important papers, emergency contact numbers and valuables you might want to take with you.
 - Designate a meeting place or out of town destination should you wish to regroup with family.
 - Identify an out of town family member relatives might all call to indicate you’re okay.
 - Keep emergency supplies (e.g. water, food) and a first aid kit handy.

When considering weather related disasters, you might also wish to address home safety concerns such as fire and fumes. Did you know that home fires are one of the most common disasters and cause more deaths than any other type of disaster? In addition to smoke detectors you may want to purchase and install carbon monoxide detectors to help protect against potentially deadly and odorless fumes. Doepke added, when it comes to disaster preparedness, remember the popular saying “better safe than sorry”.

Suggested Websites and Community Organizations

Disaster Preparedness – cont'd

In addition to the more general information on the previous page, you might want to take precautionary measures specific to the type of disaster you and your family members are most prone to experience. The following organizations offer detailed information for a variety of scenarios.

- American Red Cross – http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_239_00.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – <http://emergency.cdc.gov/>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>
- National Flood Insurance Program – <http://www.floodsmart.gov>
- U.S Department of Homeland Security – <http://www.ready.gov/> and <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/seniors.html>
- Cook County Department of Public Health – www.cookcountypublichealth.org
- Cook County Sheriff Emergency Management Agency – www.cookcountysheriff.org/ema
- Illinois Department of Public Health – www.idph.state.il.us
- Illinois Emergency Management Agency – <http://www.state.il.us/iema>

What to Include in a Disaster Supply Kit

Prepare now for an emergency as chances are you will have little time to act should a disaster strike. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security suggests the following items be included in a basic Emergency Supply Kit. In addition to the items listed below, they suggest many other items on their website, www.ready.gov/america/getakit/index.html, you might consider adding to your supply kits.

- “Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps”

Mary Doepke, Owner of Home Helpers said, “When preparing, start by focusing on basic survival, food, water and shelter, and then expand your preparation to include convenience items. Also, once you gather all the items for your supply kit, pack them in a suitcase, duffle bag or plastic storage box that is easily accessible. You might consider refreshing items periodically, especially the food and water.”

A Myth About Home Health

Myth – Professional caregiving services are an *alternative* to other care options (e.g. care provided by family/friends, or care environments such as a hospital, assisted living or nursing home.)

Reality – Home care provided by professional caregivers *often supplements* other care arrangements and helps to ensure people receive the care they need and deserve. Instead of viewing home care as a replacement for other care arrangements, home care is about meeting people's needs and wants regardless of where or when services are provided or who else is involved in the care process.

“Home Helpers provides individualized care services based on clients' preferences and according to their schedules. Our focus is on making life easier by enhancing quality of life, dignity and safety,” said Mary Doepke of Home Helpers. Many people choose home care for the individualized attention not found in many group living environments or when family members are unavailable due to other circumstances.”

While many people may view home care services as a menu of options (e.g., we do A, B, C, D), we encourage people to think about home care as a way to maintain independence and remain in the comfort and safety of their home. When family or friends are not available due to commitments to their immediate family (e.g. spouse/children), work and community, professional caregiving services enable people to enhance their dignity, safety and wellness.

As a result of aging, illness or injury, many people face functional limitations. The Administration on Aging reports that over 40% of non-institutionalized older adults reported difficulties with instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs). This means that many people need help with everyday living in order to remain independent. Other people choose home care to avoid loneliness or isolation. People who live in a retirement community, nursing home or are in the hospital often benefit from companionship, encouragement and peace of mind.

Doepke added, “Rather than compromise their independence or lifestyle, our clients tell us they want to maintain their day-to-day routine and responsibilities. They want help keeping up with the house and preparing meals. They want someone the help them get to and from appointments. They don't want life challenges to limit their ability to live.”

Did you know:

- Approx. 13 million Americans require assistance from others to carry out activities of daily living.
- About 1/3 of the people receiving home health care are <60 years of age. The need for care is often due to chronic health conditions, rehabilitation, or disability.
- Limited (not 24/7) but regular care at home costs less than 50% of care provided in a 'facility.'

Sources: The Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics and the Family Caregiver Alliance Source

Father's Day is June 15

Take the opportunity this Father's Day to let your dad know how much you appreciate him. Talk from your heart. Ask questions, gain wisdom and capture memories you can share with future generations.



HOME HELPERS – *Making Life Easier*™

Home Helpers offers personalized care services similar to the care and support that is often provided by family members. We tailor our services and schedules to address our clients' needs.

Home Helpers begins with a free in-home consultation, preferably at the care recipient's residence. This gives us the opportunity...

- To meet the client and assess the situation.
- To make sure the requested services can be properly and safely performed.
- To ensure the Caregiver assigned possesses the personality, skill set and passion that best meet your loved one's needs.

Home Helpers' experienced and compassionate Caregivers are bonded, insured and carefully screened. Our Caregivers are employees, not subcontractors, thereby minimizing client liability.

To learn more about Home Helpers, give us a call at 708-783-1220 or visit us on the web at www.MaryandMikeCare.com

Conscientious Care is a bi-monthly newsletter produced by Home Helpers. We hope you found this edition to be informative and helpful.

Home Helpers
P.O. Box 307
Western Springs, IL 60558
708-783-1220