

## EMERGENCY PLANS

We never know when a tornado, a severe weather condition or a power outage will occur. Because you may have powered equipment and oxygen that you are dependent upon, it's vital that you are prepared. Your care team can help you create a strategy that will meet your needs should a crisis occur.

## POWER OUTAGE

In case of a power outage, if you require assistance contact HOC at 891-7700 and call your closest relative. If you are in a crisis or have an emergency situation, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

## FLASH FLOODS

Be aware of flood hazards especially if you live in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam. Assemble a disaster supplies kit. Include a battery-operated radio, first aid supplies, flashlights and extra batteries, sleeping supplies and clothing. Keep a stock of food and extra drinking water. If local authorities issue a flood watch, prepare to evacuate: Secure your home. Move essential items to upper floors of your house. If instructed, turn off utilities at the main switches or valves. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water. Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you must walk in a flooded area, walk where water is not moving.

## TORNADOES

When a tornado has been sighted, go to your shelter immediately. Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls. In a house or building: Go to a small, interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible. In a vehicle, trailer or mobile home: Get out immediately and go to a more substantial structure. If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine or culvert with your hands shielding your head. In a car, get out and take shelter in a nearby building. Do not attempt to out-drive a tornado.

## LIGHTNING

Inside a home, avoid bathtubs, water faucets and sinks because metal pipes can conduct electricity. If outside, do not stand underneath a natural lightning rod; ex: tall, isolated tree in an open area. Get away from anything metal.

## WINTER STORMS

Emergency supplies to gather: A battery powered radio, food that does not require cooking, extra water, rock salt to melt the ice on walkways, and sand to improve traction, flashlights and battery-powered lamps and extra batteries. Make sure you have sufficient heating fuel. Dress for the season: Wear several layers of loose-fitting, light-weight, warm clothing. Outer garments should water repellent. Wear a hat, most body heat is lost through the top of the head.

## Questions or concerns?

Call a hospice nurse at 513-891-7700. For care-giving tips visit [www.HospiceofCincinnati.org/for-the-caregiver](http://www.HospiceofCincinnati.org/for-the-caregiver).



## Caring For Someone In The Home

Adults need to take extra safety precautions due to physical changes that occur as a part of the aging process, but also as weakness increases due to disease progression. Hospice patients are at increased risk of injury inside the home. It's important to know what you can do to promote safety and prevent harm to yourself when caring for the one you love.

## Hospice of Cincinnati Home Care Safety Guidelines Checklist

Most accidents in the home can be prevented by elimination of hazards. Use the attached checklist as a full assessment to determine the safety level of your home.

### REQUIRED ITEMS FOR HOME ASSESSMENT & REVIEW

- Emergency and Hospice of Cincinnati (513-891-7700) numbers are kept near each phone.
- There are clear pathways and exits free of clutter and furniture that you can trip over.
- Home address is visible from the street. Entrance is well lit and free of barriers.
- Steps and walkways are in good condition with secure handrails.
- All rooms have adequate lighting.

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- Night lights used when needed with a flashlight or lamp within easy reach of your bed.
- Be aware of where your pets are at all times to prevent falls.
- Use cane or assistive device for extra stability, if needed.
- Consider wearing an alarm device that will bring help in case you fall and cannot get up.
- Remove small throw rugs or use non-skid and double sided tape to keep them from slipping.
- Hazardous cleaners and chemicals are stored out of reach of children and confused individuals.
- Pan handles are turned away from edge when cooking with pot holders within reach.
- Bathtub or shower floor has non-skid mat or strips.
- Use elevated toilet seat and /or shower chair as needed.
- The water heater thermostat is set below 120 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent accidental scalding.
- Medical equipment is used properly and maintained as instructed.
- Medications stored in safe place according to instructions on label; up-to-date list is available.

### SUGGESTED HOME ASSESSMENT & REVIEW

- Valuables that may be easily stolen should be removed from sight.
- Doors are kept secured with easily managed locks.
- Open the door only to people you know or those with proper identification.
- Ask for help lifting/moving heavy objects. Move hard-to-reach items to lower shelves.
- Electrical appliances are kept away from bathtub or shower area.
- Electrical appliances and cords are clean in good working condition bearing the UL label.
- Electric cords are placed along walls – not under rugs – and away from traffic areas.
- Be sure electrical outlets are grounded and not overloaded. “Octopus” outlets with several extension cords should not be used.

### PATIENT AND HOME SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Notify Hospice of Cincinnati staff immediately in the event of a patient fall or injury.
- Provide increased observation of the patient if they are forgetful, confused or restless.
- Keep bell in patient’s reach; consider using a baby monitor if patient is unable to use a bell.
- Keep personal items and assistive devices within easy reach of patient.
- Remind patient to rise slowly from lying or sitting position to prevent dizziness.
- Keep patient’s bed in lowest position with wheels locked when not performing care.
- Offer to assist patient with toileting at regular intervals as tolerated.
- Increase safety precautions for storing medications if patient is confused or children are in the home.
- Firearms, knives, etc. are to be secured safely outside of the patient care areas.

### FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES

- There is a fire drill/safety plan prepared with a safe place to near home designated to meet family.
- Family members and caregivers should be familiar with emergency 911 procedures.
- Know your fire escape routes and plan two exits. Do not use elevators in a fire emergency.
- Smoke detectors are in place on each level. Batteries are checked and replaced when you change your clocks in the spring and fall.
- Fire extinguishers should be checked frequently for stability.
- Smoking is not allowed in bed. Patients who are confused or weak should be supervised when smoking.
- Space heaters are placed away from rugs, curtains or pathways if used.
- Kitchen curtains and loose sleeves and clothing are kept away from the stove and open flame areas.

### INFECTION PREVENTION GUIDELINES

- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after providing care to patient and after handling any type of equipment, sharps, soiled laundry or contaminated materials to help control the spread of infections.
- Properly discard disposable items (ex. tissues, dressings, diapers) in waterproof plastic bags fastened securely in the trash.
- Soiled laundry should be washed apart from other laundry in hot soapy water. Handle these items as little as possible to avoid spreading germs. Liquid bleach may be added if appropriate.
- Equipment utilized by the patient (ex. Nebulizers, commodes, walkers, bath seats) should be cleaned per manufacturer instructions and recommendation or as instructed by nurse or equipment company.
- Liquids may be discarded in the toilet and the container cleaned with hot, soapy water, rinsed and allow to dry.
- SHARPS: Place used “sharp” items (ex. needles/syringes) directly into a clean rigid container with a resealable lid (i.e., coffee can or plastic milk jug). Never recap needles once used. Secure lid on container and place in trash can. Never put “sharps” container in to be recycled.
- Blood and other body fluids are cleaned by putting on gloves and wiping fluid with paper towels. May use Bleach Wipes to disinfect area – follow manufacturer recommendation on package for disinfection process. Place the soiled items in double plastic bags and dispose of in the trash.

### OXYGEN SAFETY GUIDELINES

- NO SMOKING signs must be posted in plain sight for all who care for or visit the patient.
- Never smoke or use e-cigarettes or vapor devices while near or using oxygen.
- Do not use flammable aerosol sprays or petroleum-based products, (i.e., lip balm) as they can easily and suddenly burn.
- Avoid static electric spark conditions—nylon pajamas and robes may create static, especially in very dry conditions. Humidification may be used to decrease static electricity.
- Do not use electrical equipment (razors and hair dryers) within one foot of where the oxygen flows to your face. A spark could cause a fire.
- Keep track of your tank supply and notify your hospice nurse if you need new tanks.
- Notify HOC immediately if you have a power outage.
- Maintain functional smoke detectors

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