

## **Comments on Emergency Preparedness Guide for People on Dialysis**

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There are many guides available that address specific needs; however, having a guide isn't enough. If your attitude is "I'll put this guide in a safe place and read it when the emergency happens," you may be surprised to find that it doesn't cover your specific needs. Read the guide and think through your own situation. Plans don't always cover everything and you may have questions you would like answered BEFORE an event happens.

After reading the Dialysis plan, I have a few suggestions that may help.

The guide says "(during an earthquake) instructions for dialysis patients may be available on TV, radio, or by phone..." In Cupertino, you would listen to KCBS 740 AM or KLIV 1590 AM, check the City website at [www.cupertino.org/emergency](http://www.cupertino.org/emergency) and click on "Emergency Information" or go to a local Reporting Location also listed under "Emergency Information"; however, there is no official plan to automatically publicize dialysis information. Talk to your medical provider or the City if you would need publicized information.

The guide says "(when flying) have a 2-3 supply of all medications in your carry on bag". If airline restrictions include your type of medication, you will have to make arrangements to pick up a prescription when you land.

The guide suggests you always keep a medical history with you – including all medications taken. The only way this information will be valuable to your treatment is if you REGULARLY updated it – every time your prescriptions change. You can pick up a "File of Life" from the Community Emergency Training Center at Vallco Mall. It gives you a handy, credit card size packet, where you can keep medical information.

The guide says you might use a gas generator to power your home dialysis machine. REMEMBER that operating a generator in the house will produce carbon monoxide that can kill you.

The guide asks you to write down the emergency contact numbers for local Water and Power companies. In Cupertino, your numbers are for California Water, San Jose Water and PG&E.

The guide says you must keep a 5-7 days of medications in your emergency kit (in your vehicle). Please remember to replace these medications every time you refill your prescription so they don't expire.

The emergency diet for Dialysis patients is significantly different than traditional emergency food and water supplies. Check with your doctor to find out if you should create a special food and water kit to support your specific condition.

The guide says that if the power goes out, you should eat the food in your refrigerator for as long as possible and keep it cold by limiting the number of times you open the door. **If food has started to thaw, what can safely be kept?** Evaluate each item separately. Be careful with meat, poultry, fish and shellfish products, foods containing eggs, milk, cream, sour cream, soft cheese and all cooked foods. **When in doubt, throw it out!** The risk of food poisoning is *never* worth the cost of food. Frozen foods that have reached temperatures of 40 degrees F and above for more than two hours are not safe to eat.

Disinfecting water...with Bleach. Use bleach that has no other active ingredients besides 5.25% sodium hypochlorite. Check the label of the bleach you use! It also says that for Clear water you use the following amounts of bleach:

One quart – 2 drops

One gallon – 8 drops

5 gallons – ½ teaspoon

If the water is cloudy, use double the amount for each measurement. Mix the water and bleach together thoroughly by stirring or shaking them in a container. Let the mix stand for 30 minutes before using it. The water should have a slight chlorine odor. If it does not, add the same amount of bleach again, mix thoroughly, and let stand for an additional 15 minutes before using it. You may also purify water with rapid boiling for 10 minutes.

The guide explains how to disconnect yourself, if you are receiving dialysis treatment, when an emergency occurs. It says to go to the designated safe area. Be sure you ask your medical provider where the designated safe area is and what you can expect when you get there.

Remember...when someone offers you're a preparedness plan, read through it, jot down your questions and contact your local Office of Emergency Services to get clarification or additional suggestions.