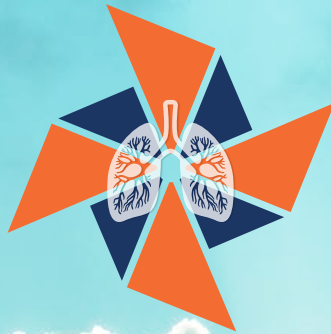




**COPD**  
FOUNDATION

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLAN



# **COPD**

## FOUNDATION

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This booklet contains important forms, charts, and lists for you to fill out as you prepare for an emergency. You will find an Emergency Contact List, Stay Kit list, Go Kit list, and For My Next Visit Checklist, conveniently located in a tear out section in the center of this booklet.



**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**

## **PREPARING FOR DISASTERS WITH A CHRONIC LUNG CONDITION**

Many people think a disaster will never happen to them. While some natural disasters may be uncommon where you live, other emergencies can happen. Being ready for a disaster is important for everyone, but especially those who have a chronic (not curable) lung condition. Planning for disasters can help you stay safe and well during an emergency.

In this Disaster Preparedness Plan (DPP), you will learn important tips for managing your condition during an emergency. In this Disaster Preparedness Plan booklet, you will find a tear out section of helpful forms, lists, and related papers.

Now that we have our tools ready, let's get started on the planning process!

## SECTION 1:

# THINKING ABOUT YOUR LOCATION AND MEDICAL NEEDS

Disasters can happen anywhere, but some areas are more likely to have certain types of emergencies. Your region may be likely to experience extreme winter weather, heat and dust storms, hurricanes and other severe storms, tornados, wildfires, or flooding. Some areas are more likely to lose power or limit water usage by residents. All of these emergencies can impact people with chronic health conditions. Think about the kinds of disasters that are common where you live.

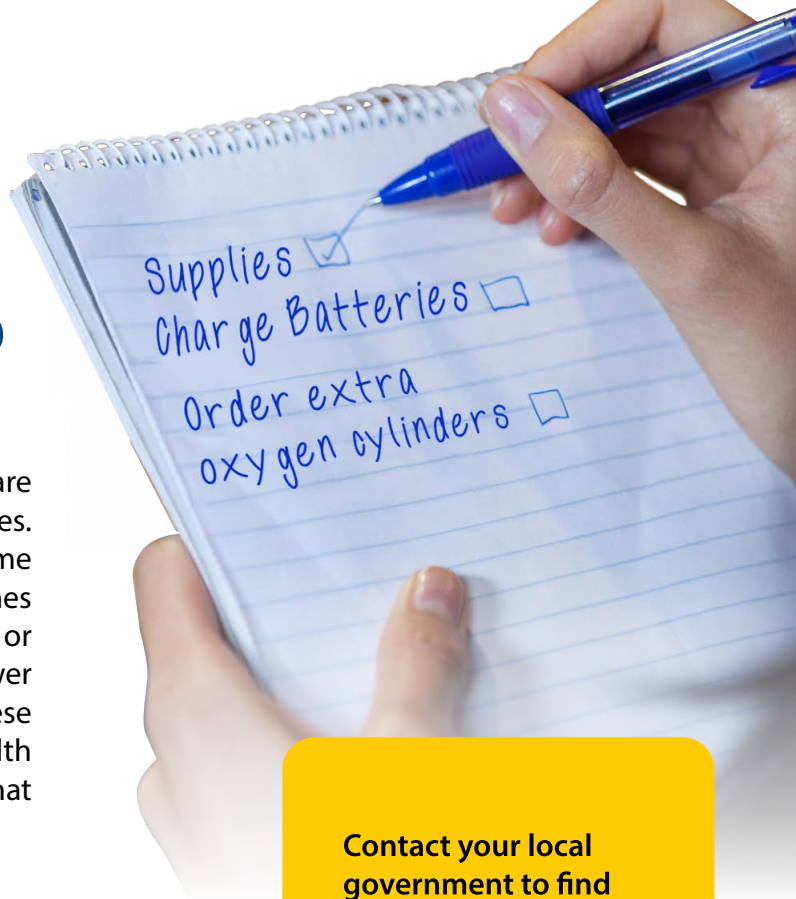
## DO YOU HAVE SPECIFIC MEDICAL NEEDS?

Some people with COPD have specific medical needs such as medication, medical equipment, and oxygen delivery systems. Think about the medical equipment you use. If it requires electricity, make sure the battery backup system is fully charged and have a plan for when that battery runs out. If you use oxygen, make sure you have a backup source like extra portable cylinders.

Some people with COPD may use a walker, scooter, or wheelchair. If you walk with the help of a walker or cane, remember to keep it nearby in case of emergency. If you have a motorized wheelchair or scooter, make sure it is fully charged when not in use. You may also choose to buy a non-motorized wheelchair as a backup in case your home loses power.

## WHAT TYPE OF HOME DO YOU LIVE IN?

The type of home you live in can present its own challenges during an emergency. For example, if you live in a rural area, it may take emergency crews longer to help you in an emergency. And if you live in a large apartment building, you may need to navigate stairs if the elevator isn't functioning. Think about the type of home you live in and the unique challenges you may face in an emergency. Make a plan for how you would escape in a fire or other emergency situation.



**Contact your local government to find out if your area has evacuation routes, medical care sites, and social services that may help you in the event of an emergency.**

# EMERGENCY SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT

## RADIO AND TELEVISION

One of the best ways to stay informed about a disaster is to listen to your local radio or TV stations. Radio stations will broadcast official updates during a disaster. You can use a battery-operated AM/FM radio for updates in case the power goes out. You can also use a hand crank radio that does not require power.

There are also special weather radios that can be useful in an emergency. A weather radio will alert you if severe weather is approaching your region. They can also warn you of other emergencies such as AMBER or Silver Alerts, dangerous conditions, and other events. These radios are operated by battery, solar power, or hand crank.

Weather applications (“apps”) are also available on cell phones. Many of them are free to download to your smartphone or tablet. They report the weather conditions, air quality alerts, pollen count, and other important information for people with COPD.



Radio and television emergency alert systems will often notify you of emergencies in your area, and your cell phone may also receive emergency alerts. To learn more about emergency alerts for cell phones, go to: <https://www.ready.gov/alerts>.



## GENERATORS

Generators are machines that make their own electrical power using gas, propane, or solar power. If the power goes out in your area, generators can supply electricity to your home. There are two main types of generators:

### Portable Generators

A small portable generator can power up to 6 to 10 circuits. Other larger portable generators can power more circuits at one time but require more fuel to run. The owner's manual for your generator will give you helpful information such as how many circuits your generator powers and the type of fuel it uses. If your generator runs on gasoline or diesel fuel, it is helpful to store extra fuel on your property. However, be sure to do it safely.

### Whole House Generators

A whole house generator can power your entire home. These generators are large and more costly than portable generators. Whole house generators run on diesel, gasoline, or natural gas. Be sure to have a licensed electrician install your whole house generator so that it is done safely and correctly.

Keep several flashlights with fresh batteries in multiple rooms of your home. These are safer and easier to use than candles.

## SAFETY TIPS FOR GENERATORS

Generators must be used outdoors away from doors, windows, and garages.

Use care when filling your generator with fuel. Gasoline and gasoline vapor are extremely flammable.

Some generators have pull starts which can require upper body strength. If you are unable to start your generator, arrange for a nearby friend or relative to help you.

## ALTERNATE HEAT SOURCES

During a power outage, it is very helpful to have an alternative source of heat for your home. These can include gas or wood burning fireplaces or natural gas heating units that are mounted to a wall. These devices will heat only one room in your home. It is important to remember that gas fireplaces often have electric starters which will not work if the power goes out. Check with your heating company to find out how to use your gas fireplace if the power is out.

**Avoid using a kerosene heater. These heaters can produce fumes which are dangerous, especially for people with chronic lung disease.**





## SECTION 3:

# START CREATING A MY DISASTER PLAN CHART

The My Disaster Plan chart is a tool that can help you plan for many different types of emergencies. This chart shows you an example of an emergency that might occur in your area, its possible effect, and what you can do to keep yourself safe and well during the event.

While filling out your chart, think about the different emergencies that could take place and what you might do if they happen. For example, if you live near a river that floods, your plan might include moving to an upstairs level of your home, going to the home of family or friends, or going to a shelter outside the flood zone.

A sample of the My Disaster Plan chart is included on the next page.

## MY DISASTER PLAN

My Disaster Plan shows you examples of possible problems and how to start planning for them. You can print extra copies of this chart through the Downloads Library on the COPD Foundation website at <http://copdf.co/education-materials>.

Possible Disaster	What Might Happen?	How Should I Prepare?	What Should I Do If It Happens?
<i>I live in an area where tornados are common.</i>	<i>A tornado could damage my home.</i>	<i>Locate the nearest underground tornado shelter. Arrange for help to get there. Store spare oxygen or medications in the shelter, if possible.</i>	<i>Get to the nearest shelter underground.</i>

## SECTION 4:

# PLANS FOR STAYING WELL

Staying well is always important for people with COPD, but it can be challenging during a disaster. Let's learn about ways to stay well during an emergency.

## MY COPD ACTION PLAN

The My COPD Action Plan is a written plan that you fill out with your health care provider. It helps you to manage your COPD when you're feeling well and when you're having a COPD flare-up. It will help you prepare for flare-ups so you can help prevent them from getting worse. You can find the My COPD Action Plan in the tear out section of this DPP. The interactive My COPD Action Plan is also part of the COPD Pocket Consultant Guide mobile app, which we talk about below.

The form is titled "COPD FOUNDATION IT'S MY COPD ACTION PLAN" and "COPD360action". It includes fields for "My Name:", "Date:", "My Doctor's Name:", "Phone:", and "Emergency Contact:". Below these is a table with columns for various activities: CLEANING, WASHING MY BED, BREWING MY TEA, BATHING, SHOWERING, WALKING, CLIMBING STAIRS, WORKING, SLEEPING, EXERCISING, and COOKING. The table has rows for "I can do this", "I struggle to do this", and "I cannot do this". Below the table are three sections: "My Green Days", "My Yellow Days", and "My Red Days". Each section lists symptoms and provides a "Take Action" list. For example, "My Green Days" lists symptoms like "My breathing is normal" and "My cough and mucus are normal", and the "Take Action" list includes "I will take all medications as prescribed" and "I will keep routine doctor appointments".

## MEDICATIONS

Work with your health care professional and pharmacist to make sure you have at least a one-week supply of your prescription and over-the-counter medicines. In some cases, you may be able to fill a 30-day or 90-day supply of medications with your local pharmacy or with a mail order pharmacy. Your local pharmacy may also offer delivery or shipping.

Home delivery of groceries, personal care items, and household or other products is becoming more common. Check with your local stores and delivery apps to see what stores deliver in your area.

## COPD POCKET CONSULTANT GUIDE MOBILE APP

The Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) mobile app can be used by patients, caregivers, and health care providers. This free smartphone app features helpful information and tools such as:

- Interactive My COPD Action Plan and tracking calendar
- Inhaler and exercise videos
- Activity tracking
- Wallet card for listing your medicines and immunizations
- "For My Next Visit" prompts and reminders



# COMMUNICATING IN AN EMERGENCY

During an emergency, it is very important to stay in communication with loved ones, emergency services, and other important contacts. Many people use cell phones for calling, sending text messages or emails, and participating in social media. These are all helpful tools in an emergency. But while many of us rely on a smartphone, tablet, or computer for communication, these types of technology might not work in a disaster. For example, cell towers may be overwhelmed in a disaster, which can leave you with no cell service. Cell phones also run on a battery that must be charged, which is impossible during a power outage. Consider installing a landline phone in your home. A corded landline phone will work if there is no power, but cordless phones will stop working when their batteries run out.

Now, let's learn about some important phone numbers that should be included in your Disaster Preparedness Plan Contact List. You will find a copy of the Disaster Preparedness Plan Contact List in the tear out section of this DPP.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES PHONE NUMBERS

In many areas of the United States, dialing 911 will contact emergency services. Other areas or countries may use a different emergency number. If 911 is not available in your area, make sure you have the phone numbers of the following services handy:

- Emergency medical service (ambulance)
- Fire department
- Police department

**Did you know?** In the U.S., you can contact the Red Cross or Salvation Army about shelter locations for emergencies. They may have "special needs" shelters for people who have special medical needs and/or service animals.





## LOCAL MEDICAL AND UTILITY PHONE NUMBERS

The next section in your contact list includes utilities and medical services. These important services include:

- Electric company
- Natural gas or heating fuel provider
- Service providers for water and sewer (or well and septic tank)
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) if available in your area
- Your oxygen supplier, home health services, and doctor's office

When calling these organizations, tell them about your medical needs such as:

- Home medical equipment that requires electricity such as an oxygen concentrator, CPAP, or ventilator
- Medications that must be refrigerated
- Mobility issues, such as requiring a wheelchair or scooter
- Your oxygen requirements

Make a plan with your oxygen supplier in the event of a power failure or service interruption. You should have extra oxygen available in case of emergency. Check to see if your oxygen delivery system has a battery backup and keep the batteries charged. Make sure you have extra oxygen cylinders (which don't depend on electricity) available for emergencies.

## PERSONAL SUPPORT NUMBERS

The last section of your Disaster Preparedness Contact List is for your personal support contacts such as your family, friends, and neighbors. Tell your support contacts about your special medical needs and make a plan to check on each other during an emergency. Update your contact list frequently to ensure the information is still correct.

**If you don't have family in your area, be sure to list local friends and neighbors as emergency contacts. Faraway family members can't always help in an emergency.**

## PREPARING EMERGENCY KITS

Another important part of preparing for a disaster is putting together an emergency supply kit. Make two emergency kits: one to take with you if you must leave your home and one to use if you stay in your home through the disaster. You will find the Go and Stay Kit lists in the tear out section of this Disaster Preparedness Plan.

### THE GO KIT

The Go Kit should hold at least a three-to-seven-day supply of necessities. The items for the Go Kit should be kept in a bag for easy carrying. Choose items that are lightweight and small. Label your Go Kit with your name and contact information. Look over the sample Go Kit in this Disaster Preparedness Plan and add your own necessities to the list.

### THE STAY KIT

In some emergencies, your home may be the safest place to be. If you are staying in your home during a disaster or emergency, you will rely on your Stay Kit. This kit will include items from your Go Kit plus additional items. The Stay Kit should be kept in plastic containers in an easy-to-access area of your home. The Stay Kit list in your Disaster Preparedness Plan lists items you may want to include in your kit. Add your own necessities to the list and be sure to include them in your kit.

## UPDATING YOUR KITS

It is important to update your Go and Stay Kits regularly. Your needs may change over time, and you may need to remove or add items. Check your Go and Stay Kit items regularly to ensure they are safe to use. Here are some tips for creating and updating your kits:

- Keep all emergency supplies in a cool, dry place.
- Store food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to protect them from pests and help them last longer.
- Check expiration dates and discard any damaged or expired items.
- Store medicines in waterproof bags in their original containers.



## SECTION 7:



# DECIDING TO STAY OR GO

The decision to stay in your home or evacuate (leave) is one of the hardest decisions to make in a disaster. Nobody wants to leave their home, especially with little warning.

All disasters are different. Think about what kind of event it is, how much warning time you have, how large of an area is affected, and how long the disaster might last. The decision to stay or go depends on your specific needs, your ability to travel, your medication and medical equipment, and your need for oxygen or electricity. When deciding to stay or go, always listen to your local emergency authorities such as police, fire, and public officials. Consider your medical needs when making this decision. Deciding to stay or go should be based on your personal safety. Ask yourself: "Am I safer at home or somewhere else?"

**A situation can change rapidly, and your plan may have to change as the event unfolds.**

If you must leave your home in an emergency, ask yourself:

- What kind of transportation you will take?
- Are the roads safe, passable, and free of traffic congestion?
- How far will you have to go and how long will you be away?
- Do you have a service animal or pet that needs to accompany you?
- How will you transport and use your oxygen or other equipment?

**When you leave your home, take your Go Kit and lock up your home. Don't forget to tell your family and friends where you're going and the best way to contact you.**

## SECTION 8:

# DISEASE OUTBREAKS

When we think of disasters, we usually think of storms, floods, and earthquakes. But outbreaks of disease and infections can also cause a crisis. There are two main categories of disease outbreaks: epidemics and pandemics. An epidemic is when many people become infected during a certain period of time. A pandemic is a larger outbreak of a disease that affects multiple countries.

## THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has been a global pandemic caused by a type of coronavirus. It is different than the common cold, flu (influenza), or pneumonia. This pandemic has affected millions of people worldwide.

## ABOUT COVID-19

COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus. It spreads from person-to-person through tiny droplets from sneezing, coughing, shouting, and singing. Some people who have COVID-19 have no symptoms but can still spread the infection to others.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other lung infections. Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. But COVID-19 symptoms may also include severe body aches, heart problems, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and extreme tiredness. Symptoms usually appear 2-14 days after exposure, but many people have no symptoms at all.



## TREATMENT OPTIONS

Like all viruses, COVID-19 is not treatable with antibiotics. Scientists are working to find new treatments for COVID-19. There are multiple COVID-19 vaccines available that help prevent COVID-19 infections in adults and some children. Check with your health care provider to see if a COVID-19 vaccination is right for you.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

## AVOIDING EXPOSURE TO COVID-19 AND OTHER INFECTIONS

It is important to reduce your risk of COVID-19 exposure, especially with a chronic lung condition. To avoid getting sick with COVID-19 and other viruses and infections:

- Limit gathering with people outside your household.
- Keep a distance of at least six feet from others.
- Try to do your important errands at less busy times such as early in the morning or later in the evening. Many stores and pharmacies also offer curbside pickup and home delivery.
- Use disinfectant wipes on high-touch surfaces such as shopping cart handles.
- Use hand sanitizer after handling money, credit cards, keypads, or touch screens.
- After your errands, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Wear a mask. You may use a single-use mask or a cloth face covering that can be washed. Remove the mask by touching only the straps. Do not touch the front of the mask.



# STAYING WELL IN A DISASTER

Staying healthy is important for everyone, but especially those with chronic health conditions such as COPD. In a disaster, your daily routines and activities can be interrupted. Don't forget to take care of yourself! Let's learn about some helpful tips for staying well in a disaster.

## STAYING HEALTHY PHYSICALLY

- **Exercise:** If you exercise regularly, be sure to keep it up even in a disaster. Keep moving, even if it's just to get up and stretch your legs or take a short walk around the room. Sitting still for too long can lead to blood clots in the legs, which can be dangerous. Even if you can't stand, you can move while sitting. Try pumping your ankles or rocking your feet from heel to toe.
- **Drink enough liquid:** Unless your health care professional has advised you to limit your fluid intake, drink plenty of water. Avoid drinks that contain caffeine and extra sugar, like sports drinks and soda.
- **Have a lung disease action plan:** Fill out your My COPD Action Plan with your health care provider and follow it. You can also use the Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) mobile app to help you manage your COPD.
- **Other health conditions:** Many people with chronic lung diseases also have other medical conditions. It's important to manage these other medical conditions (called "comorbidities") along with your lung disease. Sometimes other conditions affect your COPD if they're not treated. Be sure to take your medications as directed by your health care provider. Don't make changes to your medication or diet plans without asking your health care provider.

## STAYING HEALTHY EMOTIONALLY

Disasters are often unexpected and can be stressful and scary. If you start to feel anxious, try relaxation exercises. These can help calm you down and relieve your anxiety, as well as improving your shortness of breath. You can try techniques such as:

**Pursed lip breathing:** This breathing technique helps you focus, slow your breathing down, and stay calm. You can use it when you feel stressed or short of breath. Follow these steps to try pursed lip breathing:

1. Sit and lean forward with your arms resting on a table. This helps to relax your breathing muscles.
2. Breathe in through your nose (as if you are smelling something) for about 2 seconds.
3. Pucker your lips like you're blowing out candles on a birthday cake.
4. Breathe out very slowly for 4 to 6 seconds.
5. Relax all your muscles, close your eyes, and relax.
6. Repeat as needed.

## VISUALIZATION

While doing your pursed lip breathing, picture yourself in your favorite place, feeling happy and relaxed. Do your best to keep this image in your mind while you focus on your breath slowly moving in and out.

If your anxious feelings become overwhelming, consider speaking to a mental health professional.



## SECTION 10:



## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As a person with COPD or another chronic lung condition, you have a lot to think about when facing the possibility of a disaster. This Disaster Preparedness Plan has helped you begin that process. You now have the tools you need to consider what might happen, decide which supplies you need to get through the emergency, and stay safe during the event. Set up your Go and Stay Kits, fill out your My Disaster Plan chart, and add important phone numbers and contact information to your Disaster Plan Contact List. Keep these tools handy and update them regularly. Now you have the confidence and peace of mind that you can weather any storm that comes your way!



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## RESOURCES FROM THE COPD FOUNDATION

Learn more about COPD on the Foundation's website at [www.COPDFoundation.org](http://www.COPDFoundation.org).

For more information on oxygen therapy, coping with COPD, and other topics, download the COPD Guides for Better Living Series at [copdf.co/guides](http://copdf.co/guides).

Connect with others on COPD360social, our online community. This is a place to share thoughts and ideas, ask questions, and communicate with peers as well as experts. To join this free community of more than 55,000 individuals, visit: [www.copd360social.org](http://www.copd360social.org).

To print out extra disaster preparedness checklists and forms, visit: <http://copdf.co/education-materials>.

The free COPD Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) app is available for download. Visit our website at <https://copdf.co/pcg-download> for more information.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

American Association of Persons with Disabilities

1-800-840-8844

Emergency Preparedness and People with Disabilities:  
Guidelines, Plans, and Bibliography Resources.

<https://www.aapd.com/?s=emergency+preparedness>

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

Community Connections – Mutual Aid Groups

1-888-281-0145

<https://aarpcommunityconnections.org/start-group/>

American Red Cross

1-800-RED CROSS (733-2767)

Tips for Seniors and People with Disabilities

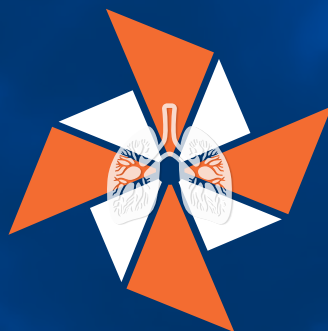
<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/mobileprogs.html>

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency

Phone: 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) [www.ready.gov/](http://www.ready.gov/)

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# COPD FOUNDATION®

*Take Action Today. Breathe Better Tomorrow.*

Miami, FL | Washington, DC

[www.copdfoundation.org](http://www.copdfoundation.org)

COPD360 Community Support Line:  
1-866-316-COPD (2673)