

Telephone: 831-649-3363

www.centralcoastseniorservices.com

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John O'Brien, Director

Welcome to the Fall 2005 issue of *The Central Coast Advisor*. We hope that seniors, their families and eldercare professionals in the Monterey County area will find this publication informative. The mission of Central Coast Senior Services is to help the older adults of our area access the quality care they need, and we hope this issue of *The Central Coast Advisor* will support that goal.

In this issue, we take a look at emergency preparedness and the special issues of older adults and persons with disabilities. When natural or manmade disasters strike, seniors can be especially vulnerable—but there are practical steps you can take to be prepared.

If you have any topics to suggest for future issues, let us know. We would love to hear from you!

Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults

The tragic losses from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have made most Americans more aware of the need to plan for emergencies. This includes preparation for natural disasters—for us that would include earthquakes, heavy rain/wind and even wildfires—as well as human error or deliberate acts: power failure, chemical or nuclear accidents, and events of terrorism and war.

In our area, we are most concerned about earthquakes...but severe storms, acts of terrorism and other disasters could also occur. If you are an older adult, or have older friends and loved ones, remember that older adults can be disproportionately affected by disasters. Physical impairments, medical and dietary needs, lack of transportation and isolation can make it harder to be safe, and to recover from a hazardous situation. But advanced preparation makes it far more likely that you will be able to take appropriate action before...during...and after an emergency.



Taking practical steps to protect yourself or your loved one begins with getting the information you need. You should **KNOW...**

- Immediate actions to take in case of a sudden emergency (such as an earthquake)
- How to tune in NOAA Weather Radio
- Escape routes out of your home in case of fire
- How to shut off the electricity, water and gas
- An out-of-area contact that you and your loved ones can reach if you are unable to make local calls
- Your neighbors. In times of disaster, people helping each other out is key. If you are disabled, make sure that someone nearby knows to check up on you—more than one person, if possible.

See **Emergency Preparedness** on page 2

Information Center

Local Senior Helpline

For local information the Alliance on Aging provides information, assistance, referrals and advocacy.
800-510-2020

The Eldercare Locator

Need information for Mom in Ohio? The Administration on Aging connects older adults, families and their caregivers with sources of information on senior services that are available elsewhere in the country.
800-677-1116
www.eldercare.gov

Respite Care Information

Call Del Mar Caregiver Resource Center at 424-4359 for more information on respite care, counseling, local support groups and workshops.
www.hpcn.org

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Once you have the information you need, the next step is to **PREPARE...**

A personal support network. This can be an informal arrangement with family, neighbors or friends.. If you use home care, speak with your agency about emergency arrangements.

A shelter plan. If possible, make arrangements in advance to stay with friends or loved ones out of the area. **Know where you should go if the order to evacuate is given.** Make arrangements ahead of time for transportation to a Red Cross or other emergency shelter. (If you have special needs, see page 3.)

Emergency preparation supplies for surviving safely and comfortably at home, as well as an *emergency evacuation kit* with survival supplies in an easy-to-carry container, such as a backpack or duffel bag. It is recommended that you have:

- One gallon of PURIFIED water (not spring water) per person per day; enough for at least five days. Water should be stored in unbreakable containers that you are able to handle.
- Non-perishable, high-energy food supply for 5 days, keeping in mind any dietary restrictions you have. Choose foods that are easy to store and carry.
- Basic utensils, including a manual can opener.
- First aid and hygiene supplies (including toilet paper, moist wipes).
- Powerful flashlight and extra batteries (Replace all batteries twice a year).
- Portable battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries.
- Candles and waterproof matches.
- Cell phone and extra battery.
- Two-week supply (minimum) of your prescription drugs and other medicines.
- Clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes.
- Blanket or sleeping bag.
- Cash, credit cards or traveler's checks.
- Phone numbers of relatives and friends, insurance agent, emergency numbers.



A place for *important papers*, such as birth certificate, will, deeds, insurance policies, and Medicare information. This can be a waterproof, sturdy container; or store them in your safe deposit box.

If you have *pets*, keep a supply of non-perishable food. Remember that if you evacuate to a shelter, normally only service animals are allowed to enter.

See **Emergency Preparedness** on page 3

• **Emergency Preparedness**, continued from page 2

Then, if an emergency does occur, you will be ready to TAKE ACTION...

- Listen to your radio or TV for instructions about the prescribed steps for the emergency that is happening.
- If you are instructed to take shelter immediately, do so at once.
- If you are instructed to evacuate, your most comfortable choice is with family or friends who live out of the danger area. Or, emergency public shelters can also provide food and a safe place to stay. Bring your disaster supply kit, and use the routes specified by local authorities.
- If instructed to do so, shut off electricity, gas and water.

For Older Adults with Special Medical Needs or Disabilities

People over 65 and people with disabilities are especially vulnerable in the event of a disaster...so take steps now to put a plan in place. According to the Red Cross, if you have special medical needs, "You are in the best position to plan for your own safety, as you are best able to know your functional abilities and possible needs during and after an emergency or disaster situation." Here are some things to consider:

- Arrange for who will help you if you need to evacuate, and have a back-up plan in case that person can't reach you.
- Persons with medical needs such as dialysis, oxygen, or infusion pump can be at grave risk if their medical regimes are interrupted, and should have access to a back-up power source, such as a generator or battery, in the home or nearby.
- If you are evacuated to a shelter, notify officials there right away about your disability and medical issues.
- Persons who are hard of hearing, or who have Alzheimer's or other cognitive impairment may miss emergency siren and radio/TV warnings. Arrange for other methods of notification. Keep in mind that the person may be hesitant to leave with a stranger.
- If you normally use an electric wheelchair or scooter, be sure you have access to a manual model.



- Have a supply on hand of your prescription medicines and any other supplies you regularly use, such as oxygen tanks, catheters, hearing aid batteries, spare glasses, etc.
- If you use a home care or home health care services, make arrangements ahead of time for evacuation procedures. Discuss the provider's special provisions for emergencies, and go over your emergency plan.
- If you or a loved one lives in a nursing home, assisted living community or adult family home, learn about the evacuation and emergency policy. When selecting a facility, ask questions about their plan. Don't assume a plan is in place. Be sure the facility has your contact information.

While it is tempting to avoid "thinking about the unthinkable," taking the practical steps to preparedness can turn worry into action. You will be able to rest easier knowing that you have done everything you can to ensure the best outcome...no matter what emergency strikes.

For More Information

Call the local Red Cross at 831-372-5490. The Red Cross website offers information on disaster preparedness, including "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs." Go to www.redcross.org for news, safety tips and updates.

The FEMA website includes a 204-page booklet to help you prepare for specific emergencies (www.fema.gov/areyouready). The site also offers information on assisting people with disabilities during a disaster. (www.fema.gov/rrr/assistf.shtm)



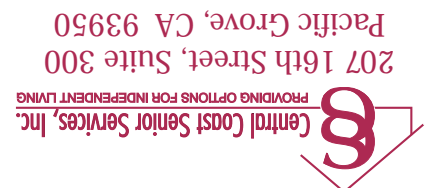
Central Coast Senior Services, Inc., was established in 1996 and has helped hundreds of individuals and their families address their long term care needs. Services include free consultations, information and referral, care management, assessments, and home management. Our Personal Attendants can assist with personal care such as bathing and dressing, meals, light housekeeping, medication reminders, and companionship. We are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, to provide our clients with excellent service.

Central Coast Senior Services, Inc.

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