

# February 2015

## Emergency Preparedness Pointers

### Prepare To Stay Healthy

Many people take medications daily as part of their health regimen. Some may be prescriptions and others may be over the counter medications. In either case they help maintain a person's well-being. Just as food and water are life sustaining goods that are stored in a preparedness kit, medications need to be included as part of the supplies. Developing a small stockpile of medications for this purpose is a vital preparedness step.

#### Know What You Need

Medication schedules can be difficult to manage under normal circumstances. Add the complications and stresses of an emergency environment and a difficult situation may now be unmanageable. This is why prior planning and preparation is critical. Start with the basics.

- + Discuss with your physician the medications taken daily and any special requirements needed to store or administer them (refrigeration, electronic equipment). Understand the possible effects of missing dosages and ask if there are any safe alternatives for emergency situations.
- + Create and maintain a current list of all medications and dosages. Make sure to add all contact information for the doctors and pharmacies related to these prescriptions to your Emergency Contact List. Keep a copy of both lists in a waterproof bag inside the 72 Hour Kit.
- + Make sure to have your health insurance or prescription-benefit card with you at all times. A pharmacy benefit provider plan may be able to help obtain an emergency supply of lost or damaged medication.

#### Establishing An Emergency Supply

The type of medication may dictate how much of a supply can be created. There will be greater flexibility in creating an emergency supply of maintenance medications than with controlled substances that could be abused. The goal is to create a 7 - 14 day supply of all required medications.



- ▶ Some medications are available in either a 30 day or 90 day supply. If possible, take the 90 day supply.
- ▶ Do not let prescriptions expire. An expired prescription requires the doctor's permission to refill which could waste precious time in an emergency situation.
- ▶ Refill prescriptions 3-4 days early. This is generally an accepted practice and will allow you to set aside a small supply over the next few months.
- ▶ Pharmaceutical salesmen often leave samples of name brand drugs with doctors. Ask your doctor for any available samples of your prescriptions to help build your emergency supply.
- ▶ Once the supply is established, rotate medications with each new refill to make sure the older stock is used before it expires.

Medications must be stored properly and expiration dates monitored. Keep them in original, labeled containers. These containers should then be placed in a waterproof bag. Inspect them each time the stock is rotated to see if they have changed in appearance or odor. Temperature extremes or moisture could cause contamination and ruin the emergency supply; it is best to store them in a cool, dry place. They should be kept in a convenient location for rotation purposes, but also near or inside the 72 Hour Kit. If they are not kept directly inside the 72 Hour Kit, place a note on the kit as a reminder to grab them during an evacuation.

#### Off The Shelf Items

When building the emergency medical supply make sure to include essential over the counter medicines, medical supplies and personal health products. Here are a few items to start with.

- + Antacid
- + Anti-diarrhea medication
- + First Aid Kit
- + Pre-packaged Handi-wipes
- + Laxative
- + Aspirin/Ibuprofen etc.
- + Spare Eyeglasses
- + Insect Repellent and Sunblock

