



Patient Engagement Toolkit

Be Prepared

Step 1 Plan

Review the following Network and community resources to plan a patient engagement activity to help patients be prepared for natural disasters and emergencies.

Network Resources

- [In Case of Emergency](#)
- [3-Day Emergency Diet](#)
- [Safe Use of Medicines](#)
- [How To Disinfect My Drinking Water](#)
- [Dialysis Emergency Takeoff](#)
- [Extreme Heat Safety Tips](#)
- [Patient Identification Card](#). This is a fillable PDF for dialysis patients.

Extreme Heat Safety Tips

Stay Cool

- Limit sun exposure by staying indoors as much as possible. Use or find a comfortable place with air conditioning.
- Use ceiling and portable fans to keep cool indoors.
- Because hot air rises, stay on the lowest floor level.
- Cool off by taking a cold shower or using ice packs.
- Consider spending the warmest part of the day in public buildings, such as libraries, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and other community centers.
- If your home does not have air conditioning, ask a neighbor with a friend or family member who has power or access to public air.

Follow Diet and Fluid Intake Recommendations

- Eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals. Ask your dietitian for kidney-friendly ideas.
- Take with your doctor before increasing any fluid intake. If you are on dialysis, you need to continue to monitor your fluids.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine and limit intake of alcoholic beverages.

Protect Your Skin

- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible.
- Avoid dark colors, because they absorb the sun's rays.
- When outside, protect your face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.

Safe Use of Medicines

Medicines are used to treat diseases, manage conditions, and relieve symptoms. Medicines are generally safe when used as your doctor states or as directed on the label, but there are some with potentially serious side effects. Each year, one million people visit the hospital because of problems with taking their medicines as recommended. The reasons why you are taking them and taking them the right way can help you use medicines safely.

What Are Medicines?

Medicines, often referred to as drugs, can be:

- **Prescriptions** - What you can get only with a doctor's order (for example, pills to lower your blood pressure or an asthma inhaler)
- **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Pills, Liquids, or Creams** - What you can get without a prescription (for example, pain relievers or tablets for heartburn)
- **Vitamins, Eye Drops, or Other Supplements**

Questions to Ask About Your Medicines

Ask your doctor these questions about your current or any new medicines they want you to take:

1. What is the name of the medicine and what will it help me with?
2. How much of the medicine should I take, how often, and for how long?
3. How long will it take the medicine to work?
4. What should I do if I miss a dose?
5. What are the side effects and when should I call you about them?
6. Can I take this medicine with the vitamins and OTCs I am now taking?

Tip: For Getting the Best Results From Your Medicines

Check Labels

- Check the label on the medicine before taking it to make sure it is for you.

www.kidney.org

Community Resources

- [Beat the Heat!](#) This handout from the American Kidney Fund focuses on how kidney patients can stay hydrated without overdoing fluids.
- [Disaster Preparedness for Dialysis Patients \(video\)](#) outlines the steps dialysis patients and families should take to ensure they are prepared in the event of an emergency. The video was made by the Texas ESRD Emergency Coalition (TEEC).

BEAT THE HEAT! American Kidney Fund

Stay hydrated without overdoing fluids

FLUID INTAKE

When you are on dialysis, fluid (water) builds up in your blood between treatments. There is some help! Info on fluid management.

Ask your dietitian how much fluid you should have each day.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND...

- Too much fluid can cause swelling, high blood pressure, trouble breathing and heart failure.
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- Salt leads to bloating and water's make you thirsty.

ASK your doctor or pharmacist if any of your medicines cause dry mouth.

DRINK slowly out of small cups.

CHILL or freeze for a softest snack.

FREEZE your ice cube tray and use like a popsicle.

CHOOSE soft fruits and veggies like a popsicle.

REMEMBER! Eat smart, eat it, keep and other liquid-based foods count as fluids, so be careful to watch your intake of fluids.

CHOP up your fruit.

SUCK on a frozen slice or sugar-free sorbet.

DROPS OF ADVICE

- [National Kidney Foundation](#) | NKF Cares: 1-855-653-2273
- [Planning for Emergencies: A Guide for People with Chronic Kidney Disease](#)
- [7 Tips to Protect Your Kidneys During and After an Emergency](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness for Dialysis Facilities: A guide for Chronic Dialysis Facilities](#) provides guidance to dialysis clinics to prepare for emergencies.

National Emergency Resources

- Federal Resources. The United States government has several agencies that work together to help people to prepare, respond and recover from disasters and emergencies.
 - The www.ready.gov has information and resources to help you “[Make A Plan](#)”, address and recover from disasters and emergencies.
 - [National Preparedness month resources and toolkit](#) includes resources and awareness activities every September.
- Common Weather Event Preparedness Resources:
 - Extreme Cold. [Be prepared for a Winter storm](#) and [Avoid, Spot, Treat - Frostbite and Hypothermia](#)
 - Extreme Heat. Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illnesses ([English/Spanish](#))
 - Flooding. [Be Prepared for a Flood](#)
 - Tornadoes. [Be Prepared for a Tornado](#) and [Be Ready! Tornadoes](#)



- Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER) Coalition's website has many resources for preparedness specific to dialysis patients, including steps to take before, during and after an emergency. Visit the website to review a variety of [patient resources](#) including:



- [Emergency Go-Bag Checklist](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness for Kidney Transplant Patients \(Handout\)](#)
- [KCER Kids](#) resources includes general resources developed to help teach youth how to stay safe and get help in emergencies.
- KCER Emergency Preparedness Awareness campaign ideas:
 - [WHAT IF...KCER Awareness Campaign](#) encourages dialysis patients to assess their level of preparedness, take steps to improve their ability to remain safe in an emergency, and engage with their care team to learn more about disaster preparedness in the facility. Each week there is a different focus.

Step 2 Act

Team up with your Peers in Action to complete a patient engagement activity.

- Talk with your Peers in Action to discuss ideas on what resources and activities they would like to see at the clinic to educate patients on emergency preparedness.
- Invite your Peers to a team huddle or to participate in a tabletop drill to share their thoughts about emergency preparedness.
- Use one of the KCER campaign ideas to engage patients in emergency preparedness.
- Create a bulletin board highlighting a different emergency topic each week for National Preparedness Month. For example:
 - Week 1: Be prepared for an emergency in-clinic (emergency disconnect)
 - Week 2: Communication Plan (know how to communicate with the clinic and make sure all contact information is correct)
 - Week 3: Emergency Supplies (ideas for an emergency kit and emergency diet plans)
 - Week 4: Plan for common emergencies (electricity outages, flooding, extreme heat, snow storms)

Step 3 Connect & Share

Share what your facility has done with the rest of the Network!

- Ask your Peers in Action for their feedback and encourage them to attend the next [Peers in Action Connection Call](#)
- Be sure to share your patient engagement activity with the Network. You can send your activities and photos to the Qsource team at qsource-peers@qsource.org.

Qsource ESRD Networks

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esrd.qsource.org