

# A Guide to **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

[www.metroaaa.com](http://www.metroaaa.com)

for seniors and their caregivers



IMMUNIZATIONS &  
VACCINATIONS



EMERGENCY  
EVACUATION PLAN



SICK DAY  
SUPPLIES



EMERGENCY  
FOOD PANTRY



FOOD SAFETY  
AND STORAGE



FIRE SAFETY  
FOR SENIORS



PERSONAL  
HYGIENE DURING  
A CRISIS



DISASTER  
SUPPLY KIT



HEALTH HISTORY  
RECORDS &  
RESOURCES



Metro Area Agency on Aging



**Funded by:**

Administrations for Community Living  
No Wrong Door ADRC Public workforce grant  
90NWP0011-01-00  
West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services  
Metro Area Agency on Aging

# BE PREPARED!

## ARE YOU PREPARED?

### FOR...

- ▶ The next power outage?
- ▶ Pandemic?
- ▶ Water Crisis?
- ▶ Food Shortage?
- ▶ Do you have sick day medicine supplies?
- ▶ Do you have food for a sick day?





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# INTRODUCTION

Currently there are more than 50 million people in the United States over the age of 65. Often these individuals are more vulnerable due to their health status and lack of preparation.

Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play. “Being prepared” will play a key role in helping people with disabilities, older adults and veterans get vaccinated, have access to health care including COVID-19 treatment, and provide them with how and where to connect with the services and supports they need to stay healthy and safe in their communities.

West Virginia experienced two crisis’ the great “derecho” with wind speeds reaching 60-80 miles an hour. Over 600,000 homes were without power. To compound the crisis this happened during a period of intense heat which made it difficult for people to live without electricity and air conditioning. Then Charleston, WV experienced the chemical spill into the water system causing a major water outage. For months, people stood in line for hours to get drinking water.

March 2020 the world as we knew it shut down due to the COVID pandemic. The one shortage we all remember most was that of toilet tissue.

No one had to leave their homes quickly during these events but what if an alarm was sounded and you were told you had to leave your home in a 15, 30, 60 minutes or you only had 2 hours to pack to get out of your home and go somewhere to safety?

Would you know what would be important to take with you?

***The following pages will help you  
prepare in the event of an emergency.***



## *Greetings from Brenda Landers*

Executive Director Of Metro Area Agency On Aging

In partnership with ACL (Administration for Community Living) I am pleased to provide you with this special edition of this magazine on Emergency Preparedness. We provided a community-based program on this topic and had such an overwhelming response to the information, we decided to put it into a publication that would reach more older adults in Region II. We also partnered with the West Virginia Region of the American Red Cross who provided valuable information on how to keep you safe.

As West Virginia experienced the 2020 pandemic, the water crisis in 2014, and the derecho of 2012 we discovered how unprepared we were for such emergencies.

As older adults it is important that we know how to prepare for emergencies of all types; water crisis, no electricity, pandemic, personal unexpected illness to name a few.

Being prepared will help eliminate some of the stress in the event of these crises. It is our hope that you will read this publication, follow the suggestions for getting prepared for a future crisis and that you will keep this magazine as a reference in your home.

Metro wants to help keep the Older Adults in Region II and throughout West Virginia to be as safe as we possible.

I hope this publication helps you to begin preparing your home and family through implementing the suggestions that have been provided.

*To your good health!*

Brenda Landers, Executive Director



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### **BOONE**

**Boone County  
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### **LINCOLN**

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Opportunity Co., Inc.**  
William Carpenter  
Executive Director  
360 Main Street  
Hamlin, WV 25523

### **PUTNAM**

**Putnam Aging  
Program, Inc.**  
Jenni Sutherland  
Executive Director  
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St. Albans, WV 25177

### **CABELL**

**Cabell County Community  
Services Organization**  
Charles Holley  
Executive Director  
724 10th Avenue  
Huntington, WV 25701

### **LOGAN**

**Pride Community  
Services, Inc.**  
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Executive Director  
699 Stratton Street  
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### **ROANE**

**Roane County  
Committee on Aging**  
Julie Haverty  
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811 Madison Avenue  
Spencer, WV 25276

### **JACKSON**

**Jackson County  
Commission on Aging**  
Chanda Engle  
Executive Director  
217 South Court Street  
Ripley, WV 25271

### **MASON**

**Mason County  
Action Group, Inc.**  
Renaë Riffle  
Executive Director  
101 2nd Street  
Point Pleasant, WV 25550

### **WAYNE**

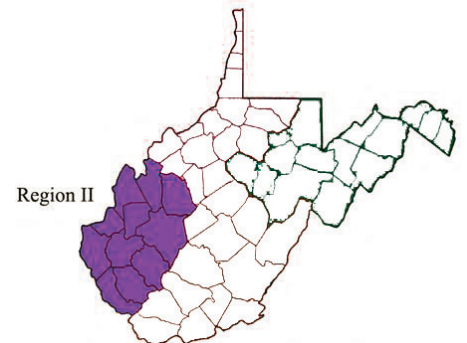
**Lincoln County  
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Bill Carpenter  
Executive Director  
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### **KANAWHA**

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Senior Services**  
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### **MINGO**

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Action Partnership, Inc.**  
Tim Salmons  
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1626 W. Third Avenue  
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# INCREASING MY KNOWLEDGE OF IMMUNIZATIONS & VACCINATIONS

**The Administration for Community Living funded the community-based program that Metro AAA implemented and is also funding this magazine. The focus of the program was to educate older adults, people with disabilities and veterans on protecting themselves from diseases that could make them seriously ill. The goal was to inform these at-risk populations about the vaccinations that are available to help protect them!**

Today’s vaccines use only the ingredients they need to be as safe and effective as possible. The gelatin and egg proteins in some flu vaccines can cause allergic reactions in very rare cases. Those affected typically have a history of severe allergies to gelatin or eggs. If you have severe allergies to ingredients in vaccines or other injectable medications, tell the nurse before your COVID-19 vaccine or talk to your doctor. *(Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: What’s in Vaccines?)*

**COVID-19** most often causes respiratory symptoms that can feel much like a cold, the flu, or pneumonia. COVID-19 may attack more than your lungs and respiratory system. Other parts of your body may also be affected by the disease. Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, but some people become severely ill.

**COVID-19** vaccines are effective at protecting people from COVID-19 and help keep adults and children from getting seriously sick. COVID-19 vaccines can reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Getting

everyone ages 5 years and older vaccinated can help the entire family, including siblings who are not eligible for vaccination and family members who may be at risk of getting very sick if they are infected. Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are effective, especially at keeping adults and children from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19.

## COVID-19 FACTS

- **COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.**
- **It can be very contagious and can spread quickly.**
- **As of June 1, 2024, nearly 1.2 million people have died of COVID-19 in the U.S.**
- **Some people are more likely than others to get very sick if they get COVID-19.**

## THIS INCLUDES PEOPLE WHO:

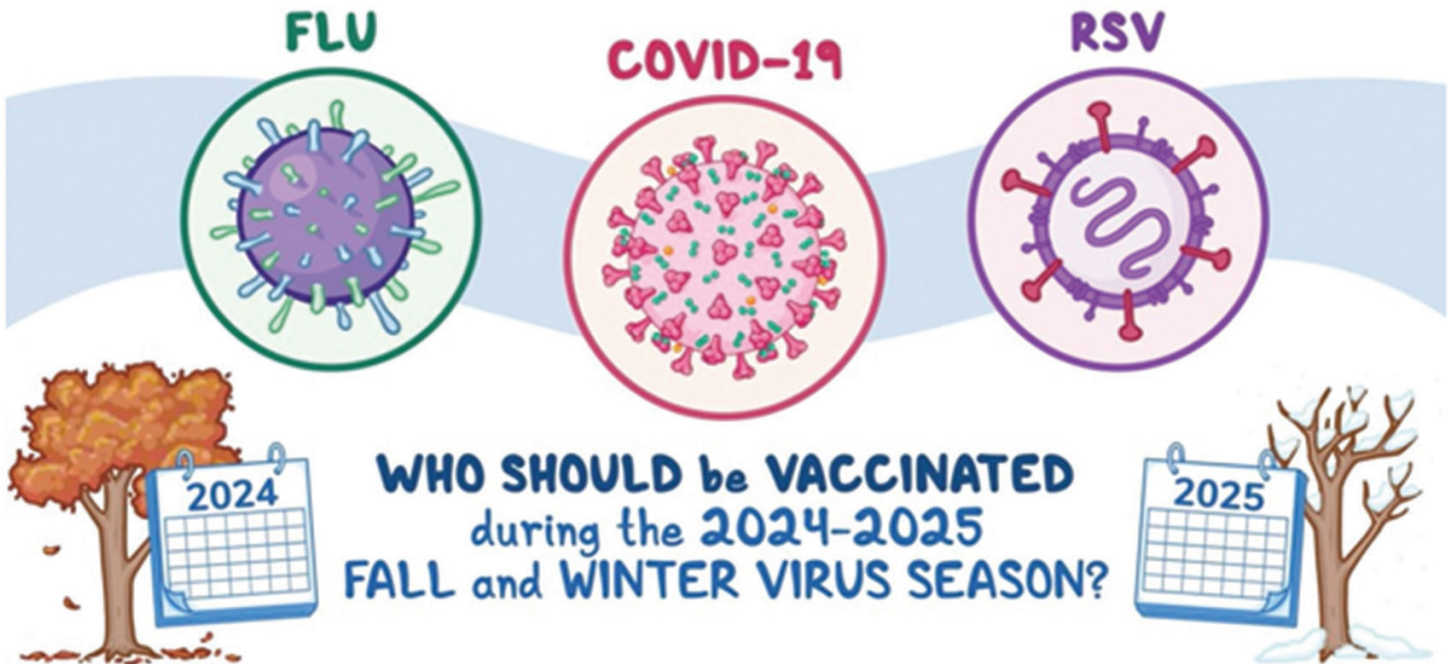
- **are older**
- **are immunocompromised (have a weakened immune system)**
- **have certain disabilities or have underlying health conditions**

*Bonus Benefits: Receiving the COVID vaccine reduces the risk of developing long COVID—debilitating symptoms like brain fog and fatigue that linger continuously for three months or more after an infection—by up to 52 percent.*



# INCREASING MY KNOWLEDGE OF IMMUNIZATIONS & VACCINATIONS

## SERIOUS HEALTH THREATS



### What vaccines do doctors recommend for you this fall and winter virus season?

- ▶ **FLU, COVID-19, and RSV** are serious health threats. Immunization against these diseases offers serious protection.
- ▶ **COVID-19 and FLU** - Everyone regardless of age.
- ▶ **RSV** - 60-75 year old with certain health conditions and all adults over 75.

# INCREASING MY KNOWLEDGE OF IMMUNIZATIONS & VACCINATIONS

Through the Health and Human Services Website, you can Order Your 4

## Free At-home COVID-19 Tests.

Every U.S. household is eligible to order 4 free at-home tests.

Your order of COVID tests is completely free - you won't even pay for shipping.

Access on line at <https://covidtests.gov/>  
OR

Place an order for your at-home tests by calling 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489).

### Other Important vaccinations for older adults:

## RSV VACCINE GUIDANCE FOR OLDER ADULTS

### What to know

- CDC recommends a single dose of any FDA-licensed RSV vaccine for all adults ages 75 and older and adults ages 60–74 at increased risk of severe RSV.
- Three RSV vaccines are currently available for adults ages 60 and older: Eligible adults can get an RSV vaccine at any time, but the best time to vaccinate patients is in late summer and early fall before RSV usually starts to spread in the community.

*Bonus Benefits: Have grandkids? Infants and young children are susceptible to RSV but cannot receive the vaccine. Vaccinating yourself can help protect them too.*

## PNEUMONIA & FLU

Adults, 65 years or older are at increased risk. Risk continues increasing as age increases: an 80-year-old has a higher risk than a 65-year-old adult. Illnesses from flu and pneumonia are often among the top 10 leading causes of deaths for West Virginians. Both the flu and pneumonia have vaccines available that can prevent the onset of this illness. It is recommended that adults over the age of 65 get the pneumonia vaccine. In some instances, it is recommended for smokers or those with other respiratory problems that are younger than 65.

*Bonus Benefits: Getting the flu vaccine is associated with a 30 percent lower risk of heart attack and death from cardiovascular disease. One possible reason? Flu infection triggers inflammation that may worsen atherosclerosis.*

## SHINGLES

Is a painful rash that usually develops on one side of the body, often the face or torso. Chickenpox and shingles are related because they are caused by the same virus (varicella zoster virus). After a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus stays dormant (inactive) in the body.

The rash consists of blisters that typically scab over in 7 to 10 days and clears up within 2 to 4 weeks.

*About 1 out of every 3 people in the United States will develop shingles.*



# EMERGENCY EVACUATION

## ITEMS TO GATHER

### 15 MINUTE WARNING

1. **Wallet, purse, credit cards, keys, passport**
2. **Cell phone, iPad, key fobs and chargers**
3. **Glasses, contact lenses, medications, hearing aids**
4. **Pets, carriers, leashes, medications**
5. **Clothes, shoes, hats, jackets**
6. **Flashlights, extra batteries**
7. **Safe deposit box key**
8. **Checkbooks, bills to pay**

### 30 MINUTE WARNING (THE 15 MINUTE ITEMS PLUS)

1. **Jewelry, valuable items, personal possessions**
2. **Sleeping bag, pillows, blankets**
3. **Address and contact list not on phone**
4. **Personal hygiene items and toiletries**
5. **First aid kit, other medical items**
6. **Pet food, dishes, bedding, litter**
7. **Children's items- special stuffed animal, toys, books**
8. **Clothing and shoes for 3 days**
9. **Laptop, computer**
10. **Drinking water**



# EMERGENCY EVACUATION



## ONE HOUR WARNING

1. **Cooler with ice, food and drinks**
2. **3 days food and special diet items**
3. **Paper plates, cups and utensils**
4. **Estate documents, genealogy records**
5. **Schoolwork, homework, pens**
6. **Licenses, vehicle titles, deeds**
7. **Insurance, financial and medical data**
8. **Personal property list, photos or videos**



## TWO HOUR PLUS WARNING

1. **Photos, albums and pictures on display**
2. **Artwork, collections, heirlooms,**
3. **Awards, military decorations, plaques**
4. **Luggage (packed)**
5. **Cameras and other valuable items**
6. **Secondary vehicle**
7. **Camping equipment**
8. **Journal, diaries, letters**
9. **Valuable bikes (if room)**
10. **Valuable wines**
11. **Valuable rugs**



# SICK DAY MEDICAL SUPPLIES



Twice a year you should take inventory of your medical supplies and medications. Throw out all expired medicines. (Dispose of them properly - most police departments will take out of date drugs.)

Thinking about who lives in your household, adults and/or children will depend on how you stock your supplies. Store medicines in a cool dry place,

preferably not in the bathroom, or the prescription bottle may have specific storage directions. Heat and humidity cause medications to lose efficacy. A dark cool location is best.

Remember to lock up any medications that could be dangerous to children, which include many over the counter drugs, such as aspirin, vitamins and supplements.



# SICK DAY MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Have the following supplies when situations arise and the drug stores are closed, or the middle of the night when the doctor instructs you to use one of the following:

**Aspirin** to relieve minor aches and pains  
Ibuprofen for pain relief

**Acetaminophen** for pain and fever  
**Thermometer**

**Throat lozenges**

**Cough suppressant** with the ingredient dextromethorphan

**Decongestant**

**Antihistamine**

**Cortisone Cream** relieve itching

**Eye drops** to relieve itchy eyes

**Antacid** heartburn

**Diarrhea medication**

**Alcohol and hydrogen peroxide** for cleansing cuts and scrapes

**Adhesive bandages** for small and large cuts and some for knuckles and fingertips

**Ace bandage** for sprains or twists

**Antibiotic cream** for wounds

**Salve** for minor burns and an anesthetic spray for sunburns

**Antihistamine** for allergic reactions and bug/snake bites

- Cortisone based topical for rashes caused by poison oak and ivy
- Sunscreen and bug spray on hand

**Lip balm** for cold sores

**Drops** for earaches

**\*\*Syrup of ipecac** on hand to induce vomiting in case of accidental ingestion of a poison.

**\*\*ALWAYS CALL THE POISON CONTROL CENTER FIRST, AS PURGING IS NOT THE BEST CHOICE FOR ALL THINGS INGESTED.**



# SICK DAY FOOD SUPPLIES

## Grocery check list:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Herbal teas          | <input type="checkbox"/> Popsicles                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honey                | <input type="checkbox"/> Bread for toast                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken broth        | <input type="checkbox"/> Eggs                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citrus fruits/juices | <input type="checkbox"/> Applesauce                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pudding mixes        | <input type="checkbox"/> Bananas                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jello                | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear soft drinks<br>(ginger ale, etc.) |



And any other foods/beverages you prefer when you are not feeling well!



If someone you know is sick and can't get to the grocery store or pharmacy, you can order "The Sick Kit" on amazon or other websites.

[www.amazon.com/sick-kit-mini](http://www.amazon.com/sick-kit-mini)



# EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY



## WHERE TO START?

- Stock up on canned foods that have the longest shelf life like beans, vegetables, meat and fruit.**
- Some shelf-stable dried goods can be a great alternative to canned foods, peanut butter, chocolate bars, and rice that is cooked, comes vacuum sealed to be microwaved.**
- Consider flavor, store extra salt, pepper and other spices that you like on hand.**
- Label your foods with expiration dates**
- Store extra food for pets**
- Dishes, utensils, hand turning can opener and other dining essentials disposable plates, utensils and paper towels.**





# EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY

**If you are still at a loss for what you should store in case of an emergency, here are a few more ideas:**

## Ideas for Non-Perishable Items

- Canned beans, vegetables and fruit**
- Canned meats, including fish, chicken, beef and turkey**
- Canned soup**
- Instant oats**
- Dry cereal**
- Condiments and spices**
- Stock and broth**
- Jelly**
- Peanut butter**
- Instant coffee**
- Dried meats such as jerky**
- Jarred baby food and formula**
- Chocolate bars with a high percentage of cacao**
- Honey**
- Protein bars**
- Instant rice**
- Candy**



# FIRST AID KITS

## Self-care tools that will be useful to have:

**Blood pressure cuff**

**Cold pack**

**Hot pack**

**Dental mirror**

**Eyedropper**

**Heating pad**

**Humidifier or vaporizer**

**Medicine spoon**

**Nail clippers**

**Penlight**

**Stethoscope**

**Pulse Oximeter**

**Thermometer**

**Tweezers**

**Adhesive strips**

**Adhesive tape**  
• 1 inch wide

**Butterfly bandages**

**Sterile gauze pads**

- 2 inch square

**Elastic (Ace) bandages**

**Gauze bandages**

- 3 inch wide roll

- 2 inch wide roll

**Cotton balls**

**Safety pins**





# FOOD SAFETY DURING A POWER OUTAGE

1. **Keep food in a dry, cool spot - a dark area if possible.**
2. **Open food boxes and other resealable containers carefully so that you can close them tightly after each use.**
3. **Wrap perishable foods, such as cookies and crackers, in plastic bags and keep them in sealed containers.**
4. **Empty open packages of sugar, dried fruits, and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight canisters for protection from pests.**
5. **Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.**
6. **Throw out canned goods that become swollen, dented, or corroded.**
7. **Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker.**
8. **Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.**





# FOOD SAFETY DURING A POWER OUTAGE

## Shelf life of foods for storage

The following provides some general guidelines for replacement of common emergency foods.

▶ **Use within six months:**

- Powdered milk - *boxed*
- Dried fruit
- Crackers - *dry, crisp*
- Potatoes

▶ **Use within one year, or before the date indicated on the label:**

- Canned condensed meat and vegetable soups
- Canned fruits, fruit juices, and vegetables
- Ready-to-eat cereals/uncooked instant cereals
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Hard candy and
- Canned nuts
- Vitamins

▶ **May be stored indefinitely** (*in proper containers and conditions*):

Wheat	Salt
Vegetable oils	Non-carbonated soft drinks
Dried corn	White rice
Baking powder	Bouillon products
Soybeans	Dry pasta
Instant coffee, tea, and cocoa	Powdered milk - <i>in vacuum sealed cans</i>



# FOOD SAFETY DURING A POWER OUTAGE

**When in Doubt, Throw it Out!**

**Refrigerated food and power outages:  
When to save it and when to throw it out**

As the USDA notes in **Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency**, your refrigerator will keep food safe for up to 4 hours during a power outage. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers after 4 hours without power. After a power outage, never taste food to determine its safety. You will have to evaluate each item separately - use this chart as a guide.

Type of Food	Exposed to temperatures of 40°F (4°C) or above for more than 2 hours
<b>Meat, poultry, seafood</b>	
Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood; soy meat substitutes	Discard
Thawing meat or poultry	Discard
Salads: Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, or egg salad	Discard
Gravy, stuffing, broth	Discard
Lunch meat, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Discard
Pizza with any topping	Discard
Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Discard
Canned meats and fish, opened	Discard
Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard
<b>Cheese</b>	
Soft cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco	Discard
Hard cheeses: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano	Keep
Processed cheeses	Keep
Shredded cheeses	Discard
Low-fat cheeses	Discard
Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination ( <i>in can or jar</i> )	Keep
<b>Dairy</b>	
Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk	Discard
Butter, margarine	Keep
Baby formula, opened	Discard
<b>Eggs</b>	
Fresh shell eggs, eggs hard cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products	Discard
Custards and puddings, quiche	Discard
<b>Fruits</b>	
Fresh fruits, cut	Discard



# FOOD SAFETY DURING A POWER OUTAGE

Fresh fruits, uncut	Keep
Fruit juices, opened	Keep
Canned fruits, opened	Keep
Dried fruits, raisins, candied fruits, dates	Keep
Sliced or shredded coconut	Discard
<b>Sauces, Spreads, Jams</b>	
Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Discard (if above 50°F (10°C) for more than 8 hrs)
Peanut butter	Keep
Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles	Keep
Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, hoisin sauces	Keep
Fish sauces, oyster sauce	Discard
Opened vinegar-based dressings	Keep
Opened creamy-based dressings	Discard
Spaghetti sauce, opened	Discard
<b>Bread, cakes, cookies, pasta, grains</b>	
Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas	Keep
Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Discard
Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes	Discard
Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette	Discard
Fresh pasta	Discard
Cheesecake	Discard
Breakfast foods: waffles, pancakes, bagels	Keep
<b>Pies and pastry</b>	
Cream filled pastries	Discard
Pies: Any with filling containing eggs or milk, e.g., custard, cheese-filled, or chiffon; quiche.	Discard
Fruit pies	Keep
<b>Vegetables</b>	
Fresh vegetables, cut	Discard
Fresh vegetables, uncut	Keep
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Keep
Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged	Discard
Vegetables, cooked	Discard
Tofu, cooked	Discard
Vegetable juice, opened	Discard
Baked potatoes	Discard
Commercial garlic in oil	Discard
Potato salad	Discard
Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard



# FOOD SAFETY DURING A POWER OUTAGE

## Frozen food and power outages: When to save it and when to throw it out

A full freezer will hold a safe temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full and the door remains closed). Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40°F (4°C) or below, however, its quality may suffer. Never taste food to determine its safety. Use this chart as a general guide.

<b>Meat, poultry, seafood</b>		
Meat, poultry, seafood – all types of cuts	Refreeze	Discard
stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
<b>Dairy</b>		
Milk	Refreeze ( <i>some loss of texture</i> )	Discard
Eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard
Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
Cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze ( <i>some loss of texture</i> )	Discard
Hard cheeses	Refreeze	Refreeze
Shredded cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
<b>Fruits</b>		
Juices	Refreeze	Refreeze ( <i>discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops</i> )
Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze ( <i>will change texture and flavor</i> )	Refreeze ( <i>discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops</i> )
<b>Vegetables</b>		
Juices	Refreeze	Discard after held above 40°F (4° C) for 6 hours
Home or commercially packaged or blanched	Refreeze ( <i>may suffer texture and flavor loss</i> )	Discard after held above 40°F (4° C) for 6 hours
<b>Breads and pastries</b>		
Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes ( <i>without custard fillings</i> )	Refreeze	Refreeze
Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling	Refreeze	Discard
Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze ( <i>some quality loss may occur</i> )	Refreeze ( <i>quality loss is considerable</i> )
<b>Other Foods</b>		
Casseroles: pasta, rice-based	Refreeze	Discard
Flour, cornmeal, nuts	Refreeze	Refreeze
Breakfast items: waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
Frozen meal, entree, specialty item ( <i>pizza, sausage and biscuit, meat pie, convenience foods</i> )	Refreeze	Discard



# FIRE SAFETY FOR SENIORS

Krista Farley Raines, Communications Director.  
American Red Cross—West Virginia Region

*In the United States, 7 people die every day from a home fire, but having working smoke alarms can cut the risk of death by half. People over 65 years of age are three times more likely to die in a home fire and those with physical or mental impairments are at increased risk.*

**Prepare Your Home:** Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas. Smoke alarms should be tested monthly while replacing the batteries at least once a year. Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years or older because the sensor becomes less sensitive over time. Install a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each separate sleeping area. Make sure everyone in your household can get out in less than two minutes and at least two ways to get out from every room. Select a meeting spot at a safe distance away from your home, such as your neighbor's home or landmark like a specific tree in your front yard, where everyone knows where to meet.



**Safety Tips:** Keep items that can catch on fire at least three feet away from anything that gets hot, such as space heaters. Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep. Smoking materials are the leading cause of residential fire deaths in the United States. So, if you smoke take precautions such as smoking outside; choose fire-safe cigarettes; use deep, sturdy ashtrays and douse cigarettes and cigar butts with water before disposal. Don't ever smoke in bed, when drowsy or medicated, or if anyone in the home is using oxygen. Use flashlights when the power is out, not candles and leave a burning

candle unattended, even for a minute. Make sure your house number is easily readable from the street, even at night. Many home fires are started by poorly maintained furnaces or stoves, cracked or rusted furnace parts, or chimneys with creosote buildup so make sure they are clean and in working order. Check electrical wiring in your home and fix or replace frayed extension cords, exposed wires, or loose plugs; make sure wiring is not under rugs, attached by nails, or in high traffic areas; electrical outlets must have cover plates and no exposed wiring; and be sure to avoid overloading outlets or extension cords.

**Cooking Safety:** Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling food. Stay in the home while simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food. Keep pets off cooking surfaces and counter tops. Keep the stove area clean and clear of things that can catch fire, such as potholders, towels, curtains, bags, and other appliances. If you are cooking and a fire starts in a pan, slide a lid over the burning pan and turn off the burner. Leave the lid in place until the pan is completely cool. Moving the pan can cause serious injury or spread the fire. Never pour water on grease fires.





# FIRE SAFETY FOR SENIORS



**If a Fire Starts:** You should know how to safely operate a fire extinguisher. Remember to **GET OUT, STAY OUT** and **CALL 9-1-1** or your local emergency phone number. Yell **“Fire!”** several times and go outside right away. If you live in a building with elevators, use the stairs. Leave all your things where they are and save yourself. If closed doors or handles are warm or smoke blocks your primary escape route, use your second way out. Never open doors that are warm to the touch. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit.

Close doors behind you. If smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with doors closed. Place a wet towel under the door and call the fire department or 9-1-1. Open a window and wave a brightly colored cloth or flashlight to signal for help. Once you are outside, go to your meeting place and then send one person to call the fire department. If you cannot get to your meeting place, follow your family emergency communication plan.

The American Red Cross launched the **Home Fire Campaign** in 2014 to save lives and Sound the Alarm is a critical part of the campaign. The Red Cross, volunteers, fire departments and partners have installed over 57,000 free smoke alarms making more than 22,000 homes safer in the Central Appalachia Region which has saved 123 lives in 42 home fires in the Central Appalachia Region. Nationwide, the Red Cross and partners have installed more than 2.6 million smoke alarms making over 1.1 million homes safer in nearly 20,000 cities and towns. There have been 2,196 documented lives saved due to these efforts over the last decade.



***If you need free smoke alarms installed, contact your local Red Cross, call 1-844-216-8286 or visiting [SoundtheAlarm.org/CentralAppalachia](https://www.redcross.org/CentralAppalachia) for a 20-minute home fire safety visit. In addition to traditional 10-year life smoke alarms installed through the campaign, the Red Cross also provides free bed shaker alarms for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. You can also download the free Red Cross Emergency app that is simple to use and lets you customize 40 different weather alerts with fast notifications plus includes step-by-step guides to help you prepare for various disasters. The Emergency app is accessible so people with disabilities can use it and is compatible with Apple Watch and Android Wearable devices. Learn more about preparedness for older adults at [redcross.org/olderadults](https://www.redcross.org/olderadults).***



# PERSONAL HYGIENE DURING A CRISIS

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of 2023, globally there were:

## 2.3 billion people

who did not have access to a hand-washing facility with water and soap at home

## 670 million people

who did not have access to a hand-washing facility at all

## 462 million children

who did not have access to hand-washing facilities at schools

### HAND WASHING STEPS INFOGRAPHIC



Rinse water



Use soap



Wash your palms



Scrub each finger



Finger interlaced



Base of thumbs



Scrub nails



Wash your wrist



Rinse off soap with water



Dry hands with towel, tissue or dryer



Hands are clean

Clean, safe water is essential for proper hygiene and hand washing, but when the water has been contaminated and cannot be used for personal hygiene, then what?

Hygiene is especially important in an emergency such as a flood, hurricane or earthquake, but finding clean, safe running water can sometimes be difficult.

The following information will help to ensure good hygiene and hand washing in the event of an emergency. You will be surprised to learn what you can do with as

little as two cups of clean water in lieu of a shower or bath.

Personal hygiene requires the cleaning of all parts of the body.

The face and hair have to be cleaned because they accumulate grime and emit odors. Hands and fingernails have to be cleaned because the germs in between the fingers and fingernails can cause issues such as diarrhea, worms or fungal skin infections.

The teeth and mouth have to be cleaned because they emit bad odors, cause mouth and dental diseases such as cavities and Gingivitis, in addition to stomach disorders due to indigestion.

Hygiene also includes the most delicate areas of the body that we often do not want to discuss. It is however, necessary to talk about cleaning the more delicate and private parts of the body. Without an adequate water supply for a period of two to three days many body odors will begin to manifest themselves.



# PERSONAL HYGIENE DURING A CRISIS



Keep yourself clean when access to clean water is limited to nonexistent, find access to the following items for a sort of mini-bath.

**Disposable paper cups**

**Paper towels**

**Disposable wipes**

(nothing with harsh chemicals)

**Mild soap**

**Disposable gloves**

**Garbage bag** (marked contaminated refuse) to place and seal the used products.

*Using approved water such as bottled*

**Water** - 1. Heat approximately two cups and pour one into a disposable cup or bowl. 2. Pour the other cup into a different disposable container.

*To reduce contamination wear disposable gloves for the following process.*

3. Using a section of paper towel with just a drop of soap or pretreated wipe, wipe and clean your entire body, starting

with the face first, then arms, legs, chest and underarm area. 4. Dispose of the used wipe and obtain a fresh wipe to continue bathing the more private areas of the body. 5. Clean the genital area, rinsing well, then continue on to the anal area last. 6. Remember to dispose of all cleaning materials in a garbage

**Mark this bag as “DESIGNATED CONTAMINATED REFUSE”.**

Proper disposal of used cleaning items is vital to limit the spread of possible disease and infection. Controlling the disposal of bacterial sources (such as soiled exam gloves, dressings, etc.) can be done by putting used products in plastic bags, tying them off and marking them as **“MEDICAL WASTE”.**

**As history has proven, West Virginians could find ourselves in a situation without adequate water supply.**

**Prepare yourself and your family.**

Practice using less water to brush your teeth, showering, washing your hands, cooking so when a real disaster strikes you are more prepared. It is also recommended that you keep 1 gallon of drinking water per person, per day for a minimum of 3 days, aiming for a two-week supply in case of an emergency.



## ▶ KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

*How to Create and Store an Emergency Water Supply*  
<http://cdc.gov/water-emergency>  
CDC, (Aug 28, 2024)

**Individual needs vary:** People in hot climates, children, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and those who are sick may require more water than the standard amount.

**Use for sanitation:** This stored water can be used for drinking, cooking, and basic hygiene like brushing your teeth.

**Consider your pets:** Don't forget to include water for your pets in your emergency supply.

# HOW TO PACK A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT



In the event you need to **evacuate at a moment's notice** and take the essentials (*you probably will not have the opportunity to shop/search for supplies you and your family will need*).

**Every household should assemble a disaster supplies kit and keep it up to date.**

A disaster supply kit is a collection of basic items a family would probably need to stay safe and be more comfortable during and after a disaster.

Items should be stored in a portable container(s) near/close as possible to the exit door.

Review the contents of your kit at least once per year or as your family's needs change. Also, consider having emergency supplies in each vehicle, and at your place of employment.

## BASIC DISASTER SUPPLY KIT

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three-day supply of non-perishable food and manual can Opener                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistle   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three-day supply of water<br>(one gallon of water per person, per day)            | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra clothing and blankets   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight and extra batteries  | <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopies of identification and credit cards  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit and manual  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash and coins  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation and hygiene items (hand sanitizer, moist towelettes, and toilet paper) | <input type="checkbox"/> Special needs items such as prescription medications, eyeglasses, contact lens solution, and hearing aid batteries, Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matches in a waterproof container   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools, pet supplies, a map of the local area, and other items to meet your family's unique needs  |

Food and Water in an Emergency, FEMA & American Red Cross  
FEMA 477, Red Cross 658613, rev. May 2006

West Virginia

2021

# Senior Resource Guide



*A Resource Guide for Older Adults & Their Families*



West Virginia  
Bureau of  
Senior Services

A Publication of HD Media, LLC



WVSU  
Metro Area  
Agency On Aging

*To access the WV Senior Resource Guide  
go to the following website:*

<https://www.metroaaa.com/senior-resource-guide.html>



# HEALTH LITERACY AND IMMUNIZATION

## What is so important about health literacy?

The National Institutes of Health states that, “Similar to our traditional understanding of literacy, health literacy incorporates a range of abilities: to read comprehend, and analyze information; decode instructions, symbols, charts and diagrams; weight risks benefits; and, ultimately, make decisions and take action with regard to their health.” The long-term impacts of health literacy include a reduction in patient’s time spent with his or her health care provider, a reduction in the overall costs to the consumer, and compliance with insurance companies’ health plans quality standards.

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### INTERESTING FACTS

**Adults with low health Literacy:** Misuse of information, nearly 9 out of 10 adults have difficulty using the everyday health information that is routinely available in our healthcare facilities, retail outlets, media and communities

**Poor health literacy is a stronger predictor of a person’s health than his age, socio-economic status, education, or ethnicity. (AMA Foundation)** Without clear understanding of health literacy information, individuals are more likely to skip necessary medical tests, forgo preventative health measures, and have higher rates of hospitalization and emergency services. **(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)**

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Building personal health literacy skills and abilities is a lifelong process.

No one is ever fully health literate. Everyone at some point needs help in understanding or acting on important health information or navigating a complex system. Even highly educated individuals may find health systems too complicated to understand, especially when a health condition makes them more vulnerable.

What is the national cost of the lack of adequate health literacy skills? Individuals with limited health literacy incur medical expenses that are up to four times greater than the patients with adequate literacy skills, costing the health care system upwards of \$200 billion every year in unnecessary doctor visits, tests and hospital stays.

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**The most helpful activity you can do as part of the Health Literacy concept is to keep track of your health history through journaling (keeping good records of your medical reports, doctor visits, medication you take, family health history etc. You may have already participated in a community based program where you received a copy of a PERSONAL HEALTH HISTORY JOURNAL**

**Cut out. Fill out with ballpoint pen.  
Fold to fit in your wallet. Update yearly.  
Keep on hand for emergencies.**



PATIENT NAME: _____				BLOOD TYPE _____		
DATE	NAME OF MEDICATION	DOSAGE	DIRECTIONS		DATE STOPPED	NOTES: REASON FOR TAKING / PHYSICIAN NAME

Made available through the Metro Area Agency on Aging

fold  
line

**This Card Could Save Your Life!  
Make sure all your family and friends have forms**

PHARMACY
PHONE NUMBER

1. **Always keep this form with you!**
2. **LIST ALL MEDICATIONS** you currently take. Be sure to include **over-the-counter medications** (examples: Aspirin, Tylenol, Vitamins, Antacids, Ginseng); and medications taken only as needed (example: Nitroglycerin).
3. Take this form to **ALL** physicians office visits, emergency room visits, hospital admissions and all medical testing (Lab, X-ray, MRI, CT, etc.).
4. Update this form as changes are made to your medication(s). If a medication is stopped, draw a line through it and record the date stopped.
5. Be sure to write down the physician(s) who told you to take the medication. Others may need to consult with them.
6. In the "notes" column, record why you are taking the medication (Examples: high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high cholesterol, for pain, sleeplessness, etc.).

**Universal Medication Form for:**

NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY/STATE/ZIP	
BIRTHDAY	HOME PHONE
WORK PHONE	CELL PHONE
#1 EMERGENCY CONTACT	
HOME PHONE	CELL PHONE
PRIMARY PHYSICIAN	
PHONE NUMBER	
ADDITIONAL PHYSICIAN/PROVIDER (i.e. PA, NP, CNMW)	
PHONE NUMBER	

fold line

I AM ALLERGIC TO:	DESCRIBE REACTION:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

IMMUNIZATION RECORD (Record the month/year of last dose received)					
TETANUS:		FLU VACCINE(S):			
PNEUMONIA VACCINE:		HEPATITIS VACCINE:		OTHER:	
DATE	NAME OF MEDICATION	DOSAGE	DIRECTIONS	DATE STOPPED	NOTES: REASON FOR TAKING / PHYSICIAN NAME

PATIENT NAME: _____					
DATE	NAME OF MEDICATION	DOSAGE	DIRECTIONS	DATE STOPPED	NOTES: REASON FOR TAKING / PHYSICIAN NAME



# WEST VIRGINIA AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER



**ADRCs are nationwide initiative that provide information, assistance, and counseling to help people access long-term services and support programs.**

**ADRCs are available to people of all income levels.**

**To contact your local ADRC resource specialist:**

**Call**

**1-866-981-2372**

**824 Cross Lanes Drive**

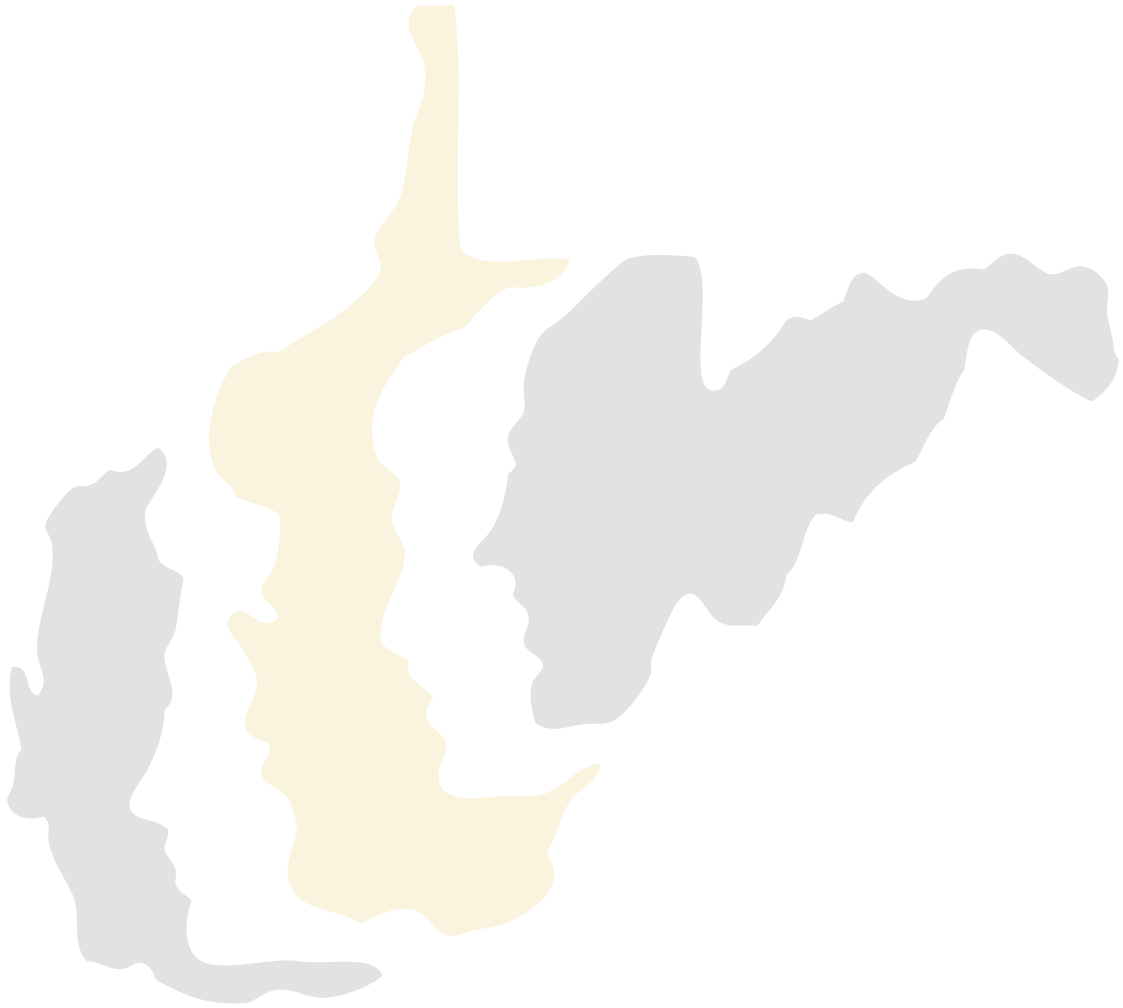
**Cross Lanes, West Virginia 25313**

# **QUICK GUIDE TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

**To access a quick guide to  
community services go to:**

**<https://www.regionalfrn.org/resources/quick-guides.html>**

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Metro Area Agency on Aging