

Caring for Seniors in Residential Care in an Emergency

Planning for and managing in disasters, such as forest fires, floods, earthquakes and storms, requires consideration of the needs of seniors, especially in residential care facilities.

Caring for a Family Member in a Residential Care Facility

BC health authorities are required to have emergency preparedness plans for all health care and residential care facilities. In an emergency, health authorities need to continue caring for people evacuated from hospitals and other health care facilities.

Residential care facilities will work with health authorities and local emergency responders to make sure residents are safe whether they stay in the care facility or move to another location.

For information on emergency preparedness and planning at the facility where your family member resides, consider asking:

- What is the facility's evacuation plan?
- Where would facility residents move or relocate to?
- What is the role of families in emergencies?

In an emergency, some families may want to care for their family members themselves. If you want to care for your family member during an emergency, you need to consider if your home is suitable, if you have the skills to care for a person with complex medical conditions and/or dementia, and how you can provide for your family member's needs while caring for yourself as well. Things to consider include:

- Mobility aids, such as a walker or a wheelchair

- Medication storage and administration
- Assistance with transfers, such as helping the person in and out of bed and with stairs
- Special equipment, such as lifts, grab bars, and a raised toilet seat
- Special dietary needs
- Safety and security of your home.

For More Information

- BC HealthGuide handbook, available at any pharmacy or government agent's office in BC
- BC Health Authorities
www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/socsec/
- Emergency Management BC, Provincial Emergency Program
www.pep.bc.ca/index.html
Toll-free in BC: 1-800-585-9559
- Public Safety Canada
www.ps-sp.gc.ca/chan/cit/index-en.asp

For more BC HealthFile topics visit
www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm,
or visit your local public health unit.

Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a
registered nurse, available 24-hours every
day:

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

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health information you can trust at
www.bchealthguide.org