

Kent County Health Department CPAP Preparedness Fact Sheet



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
Caring today for a healthy tomorrow

Your CPAP

A Constant Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine is most often used to help people with sleep apnea breathe consistently through the night. Sleep apnea causes you to stop breathing during sleep, and your brain wakes you up to start breathing again. Your CPAP machine is prescribed with specific airflow settings and mask over the mouth and nose to meet your breathing needs.

Why Prepare?

In an emergency, like a power outage, you may not be able to use your CPAP. If you have to evacuate your home and leave your CPAP behind, you may not have access to another with the settings and equipment you need. For most people, not using a CPAP for a few days will not be life threatening. However, you may experience fatigue, headache, and decreased focus the next day. It is important to plan ahead to reduce the time you are without a CPAP machine.

How Do I Prepare?

- **Know your CPAP machine.** Write down your machine's model name, your mask type and size, your apnea level, and your machine settings. Keep this information and your list of medications with you at all times.
- **Talk to your doctor.** Ask your doctor about the risks to your health if you are without your CPAP. If your CPAP is prescribed for a condition other than sleep apnea, talk to your doctor about an emergency plan, like battery back-up. There is peace of mind in knowing the facts, and knowing will help you prepare.
- **Tell a friend.** Make sure trusted family, friends or neighbors know how to help you operate your CPAP and where to find your medications list in an emergency.

- **Consider energy back-up.** If your machine has battery back-up, consider buying an extra battery. Insurance does not cover the cost of batteries. You might also purchase a back-up generator for your home, especially if you take medications which require refrigeration, or if you use other electrical medical equipment.
- **Make an emergency bag.** You may have to leave your home in a hurry. Assembling a bag in advance with your important information and medical supplies—like an extra mask—will save precious time. See next page for emergency bag content ideas.

What If I Evacuate?

- **Take your machine and list.** If possible, take your CPAP machine with you. If not, make sure you have your medications list with your CPAP information on it.
- **Talk to responders.** Tell response personnel if you had to leave your CPAP machine behind. A responder may be able to retrieve it for you if it is safe to do so.
- **Inform the shelter.** If you evacuate to a shelter, tell the intake worker you use a CPAP. If you have it, they can situate you near a power source. If you do not, they may be able to accommodate your need; however, you will most likely need to wait.

Anything Else?

Be a good neighbor! Tell your neighbors that it is important for all of us to plan ahead in case of an emergency. Ask how you can help them in an emergency. Visit the local fire department and tell them how your neighborhood is preparing for emergencies. Contact your local 2-1-1 and Red Cross when you need help, and 9-1-1 in an emergency.

CPAP Preparedness Fact Sheet – Emergency Supplies Kit

Whether an emergency or disaster causes you to stay at home or evacuate for safety, preparing an emergency supplies kit ahead of time makes sense. An emergency supplies kit should contain the items you need to stay healthy and safe. Following is a list of recommended kit items adapted from the FEMA website Ready.gov.

Basic Supplies Kit

- **Water**, one gallon per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- **Food**, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- **Radio**, battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert; extra batteries for both
- **Flashlight** and extra batteries
- **First aid kit**
- **Whistle** to signal for help
- **Dust mask** to help filter contaminated air
- **Plastic sheeting** and **duct tape** to seal openings (vents, windows, doors) when sheltering-in-place
- **Sanitation items**: moist wipes, garbage bags and plastic ties
- **Wrench/pliers** to turn off utilities
- **Manual can opener** for food
- **Local maps**
- **Cell phone** with chargers, inverter or solar charger

Medical Information and Supplies

- **Prescriptions list**, including medical conditions, allergies, durable medical equipment used and equipment settings, and physician contact information
- **Extra contact lenses, glasses**
- **Hearing aid batteries**
- **Extra cane**
- **Durable medical equipment** extra parts, such as batteries, masks, tubing
- **Syringes**
- **Doctor(s) contact information**

Additional Supplies

- **Infant formula**
- **Diapers**
- **Pet food/extra water** for your pet or service animal
- **Cash** or traveler's checks and change
- **Important family documents** such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container.
- **Emergency reference material** such as a first aid book or preparedness brochures
- **Sleeping bag/warm blanket** for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- **Complete change of clothing** including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- **Household chlorine bleach & medicine dropper** – When diluted, nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant; or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- **Fire extinguisher**
- **Matches** in a waterproof container
- **Feminine supplies/personal hygiene items**
- **Eating supplies**: mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- **Paper and pencil**
- **Books, games, puzzles** to keep children and adults entertained

Go Bag

Consider what you absolutely need if you have to leave your home in a hurry. Prescription medications, medical information, important papers...think about what will help you stay healthy and identify yourself if you have to evacuate.