

Preparing for and Preventing Medical Emergencies

An Overview

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OBJECTIVES OF TODAY'S PRESENTATION

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO PREVENT MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND MITIGATE IMPACT.

WHAT IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

A MEDICAL EMERGENCY IS AN URGENT SITUATION THAT PRESENTS A RISK TO LIFE. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CAN TYPICALLY BE AVOIDED THROUGH PLANNING, EDUCATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROPRIATE PROTOCOLS.

AREAS WHERE WE CAN TAKE ACTION

- PROVIDING A PERSONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE TOOL
- COORDINATING WITH FIRST RESPONDERS
- DOCUMENTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND MEDICATION
- ADVOCATING WITH PHYSICIANS AND HOSPITALS

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What is a P.E.R.S. ?

P.E.R.S. (sometimes shown as “PERS”) is a Personal Emergency Response System. They were created to provide a homebound individual to summon assistance in the event of an unforeseen circumstance that prevents someone from helping themselves from recovering from a fall, or who was experiencing symptoms of a medical emergency.

Are There Different Kinds of PERS?

- As technology evolved, the original capabilities were expanded, and options were added to meeting the demands of users.
 - Different Hardware (base station and signaling devices)
- Different Services
 - Central Station Service
 - Calling Designated Family Member

Common Components of PERS

- Signaling Device for use by patient
 - Pendant
 - Wrist button
- Base Station
 - In-Home Device to recognize Signal for Help
 - Calls Central Station
- Central Station
 - Staffed 7 by 24 to receive calls from Base Stations and communicate with Patient
 - Contacts appropriate First Responder Agency

Type of PERS Systems

- Basic In-Home, Base Station PERS
- In-Home Base Station PERS with Two-Way Signaling Device
- Out of Home Device using Cellular Technology for broad coverage

Basic In-Home PERS

- Requires Base Station connected to phone line to communicate with central station.
- Limited range within the home
- Requires patient to be able to speak loud enough for base station microphone to hear them

In-Home Base Station with Two-way Signaling Device

- Requires Base Station connected to phone line
- Limited range within the home
- Signaling device (pendant) has microphone with two way capability to participate in call with Central Station

Out of Home Device using Cellular Technology for broad coverage

- Does NOT require an In-Home Base Station
- Totally Dependent on Cellular Coverage to provide service.
- Provides two-way communication between Patient and Central Station

Supplementary Services

- Fall Detection (Signaling Device Specific)
- Geographic Location Monitoring (requires GPS)
- Central Station calling a family member in addition to First Responder
- Central Station Check-In with Patient

Factors to Consider in Choosing a PERS

- Can Patient be relied upon to activate Signaling Device – e.g. is cognitive impairment an issue?
- Is Patient a Fall Risk – should a fall detector equipped Signaling Device be selected?
- Can Patient set-up the device? Service Providers that perform setup and testing are the recommended option.
- Who services the PERS if there is a failure? Is service available seven days a week?

Factors to Consider in Choosing a PERS (continued)

- Are loaner devices available while something is being serviced?
- Does the PERS seller use their own Central Station, or is it contracted? How qualified are the Central Station Attendants? Are they trained in First Aid to recognize the problem?
- How long has the PERS seller been in business?

Factors to Consider in Choosing a PERS continued

- Are the Signaling Devices waterproof?
- Is there a separate dedicated signaling device for the shower?
- Does the Patient have a hearing limitation that would prevent him/her from communicating over two-way devices?

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COORDINATING WITH FIRST RESPONDERS

- DISABLED RESIDENT REGISTRATION
- RAPID/ENHANCED ACCESS – LOCKBOXES
- DOOR / WINDOW DECAL
- FIRST RESPONDER ORIENTATION

DISABLED RESIDENT REGISTRATION

Known by many names, these programs allow resident to register the presence of a disable individual with the First Responder Agencies.

Through the efforts of these programs, First Responders are notified of the special circumstances at the time of dispatch, in advance of arrival on scene.

Fairfax County program information and enrollment is available online at:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/911/emergency-health-profile>

Arlington County program information is available online at:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Fire/Emergency-Medical-Services/Emergency-Triage-Treat-and-Transport-ET3>

RAPID / ENHANCED ACCESS

Many jurisdictions offer a program by which First Responders can gain rapid access using a special key or combination to an on premises lockbox. Some agencies use what is call a KNOXBOX, which is a hardened key contained to which Fire & Rescue Service personnel have the key. In other cases the use of a lockbox is offered - the combination to the lockbox is registered with the agency.

DOOR /WINDOW DECAL

To identify the presence of an individual with special needs, many jurisdictions offer special decals for placement on entrance doors or windows. These alert First Responders as they arrive on scene.

FIRST RESPONDER ORIENTATION

While not all agencies offer this opportunity, some will allow you to invite representatives from the principal responding Fire or EMS station to visit your residence to become acquainted with your special needs.

To see if this is available call the Non-Emergency telephone number for your Fire / EMS Department.

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DOCUMENTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND MEDICATION

- CUSTOM, SELF-PREPARED LISTING
- VIAL OF LIFE
- MEDIC ALERT
- FIRST RESPONDER HEALTH PROFILE

SELF PREPARED LISTING

RECOMMENDED CONTENTS:

- List of medical conditions with PARKINSON'S DISEASE at the top.
- List of implanted devices, such as DBS device, DUOPA device, Pacemaker, Defibrillator, Implanted lenses, stents, mechanical joints.
- List of all Medications in Alphabetical Order.
- List of the time and Dose of all Medications in Chronological order.

VIAL OF LIFE

The Vial of Life program is a nationwide program by which individuals can place a special decal on their entrance door to notify first responders that a comprehensive set of medical information is located on the refrigerator in the kitchen.

The standard form and instructions are located at:

<https://www.vialoflife.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/VOLFORM2022May27.pdf>

Your Self Prepared List should be appended to it.

MEDIC ALERT

Medic Alert is a long established charity whose mission is to provide its paid members with a repository of individualized medical information that can be accessed by emergency and medical personnel. (Medic Alert is a distinctly different organization from Medical Alert that advertises on television.) Members wear specialized identification devices and carry wallet cards that provides instructions on how to access the appropriate medical information.

Information about Medic Alert can be found at:

www.medicalert.org

FIRST RESPONDER HEALTH PROFILE

Many jurisdictions offer the ability of an individual to register critical Health Profile information with the FIRE/EMS organizations. As mentioned previously, when this capability exists, it enables First Responders to have appropriate knowledge before they arrive.

You can use the agency's form, supplemented by your Self Prepared Listing form to provide this valuable information.

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ADVOCATING WITH DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS

The Healthcare environment today places the responsibility for advocating for a patient's interests with the patient (or care partner). Too little time exists in the average physician visit to allow for the physician to get complete information from the patient. Therefore, you should:

- Maintain a patient portal account and be certain to always update it with the latest information. Make sure the medical information from your Self Prepared Listing, as previously described, is uploaded.
- Carry a copy of your Self Prepared Listing to each appointment and hand it to the physician.
- When visiting an Emergency Department, having an Outpatient Procedure, or being admitted, provide a copy of your Self Prepared Listing. **Make certain Nurses and Physicians know that you have Parkinson's Disease and understand the criticality of matching your medication schedule and dose.** Also mention any specific dietary requirements.

ADVOCATING WITH DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS

(continued)

Obtain a copy of the Hospital Safety Guide from the Parkinson's Foundation.

It is an excellent source of information and provides forms and identification cards that are helpful in providing you the opportunity to have the best possible outcome.

Copies may be ordered or downloaded at:

www.Parkinson.org/HospitalSafety

IN SUMMARY, PREPARING FOR AND PREVENTING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES REQUIRES:

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