

Real-Life Medical Survival

I am currently in the midst of a survival crisis. Oh, it's nothing dramatic and it probably doesn't look like survival or a crisis to anyone but my wife and I. But the reality is that the current situation could have a major impact on my ability to survive. That makes it of some concern to me, even if it isn't of concern to anyone else.

There are many survival situations that can be described in just the same way. Many people pass through personal crisis situations, which tax their ability to survive, or at least tax their ability to survive in the same level of comfort they are living in before the problem strikes. You can't tell me that losing your job isn't a survival situation, especially in the current job market, where it can take months to find another job. There are a lot of jobs out there; but they remain unfilled because there aren't enough trained people to fill them. Those jobs aren't going to help anyone, unless they have those skills.

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My personal semi-crisis isn't one of needing a job; I have trouble getting all the work I have done each week. I'm turning away work right now, so that I don't get overloaded to the point where my work suffers. Rather, my problem is medical in nature.

As we age, it's not uncommon for us to have various problems with our bodies, especially if we don't take care of ourselves when we are younger. As our population becomes more obese, certain medical conditions, like high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes are also on the rise. So, there are a lot of older

folks end up taking a handful of prescription medicines every morning, keeping their bodies in check.

Herein is the root of my problem. Like many others, I take a variety of medicines every day. Doing so keeps me healthy... or at least that's what the doctors tell me. It probably keeps their wallets healthier than it keeps my body; but that's a discussion for another day.

My primary care provider, who is older than I am, just recently retired. I had an appointment with her, two weeks from her retirement, at which she promised to renew my prescriptions before retiring. Oops! That didn't happen. Adding to the problem was that not only do I have to find another primary health care provider, but my insurance is changing too. Have you noticed that most doctors don't care about your schedule or your need to see them, until it is an actual emergency? So, we're looking at a three-month gap in time, between seeing her for the last time and seeing my new provider, who will hopefully take my word for it that I'm on all those medications and renew my prescriptions.

What this means is that I'm running out of my medications; something that is likely to happen to a lot of people in a TEOTWAWKI event. Since I'm not ready to die right now, I need to find a solution that will allow me to maintain my health.

Make a Life Change, Controlling Your Eating

We all know that modern food isn't really all that nutritious. Packaged foods of every type aren't made with the idea of making them nutritious, but rather of making them tasty, which leads to being profitable. Even the produce that we buy isn't as nutritious as it used to be, as farming has depleted the ground of many nutrients.

Nonetheless, few of us today even try to eat a healthy diet. We overeat, eat too many snacks, and are addicted to sugar and salt. All this leads to obesity, causing the aforementioned health problems.

A number of years ago, I was confronted with the reality that pretty much all my critical numbers, from my blood test, were high. The doctor could prescribe medicines for me to take, which would help with those problems, but the medications would only do so much. I had to make a lifestyle change, eliminating much of the sugar and carbohydrates from my diet, or eventually the medications wouldn't be able to help me enough. I made a decision to change my diet, which is good, as the problems which showed up back then have only gotten worse.

Know Your Meds

If you're going to deal effectively with a shortage of medicines, you need to know what those medicines do. I'm not just talking about knowing that Lisinopril helps with blood pressure; but how it helps. If you end up having to look for a replacement, you'll need to know the exact mechanism by which the medicine works, so that you'll be able to focus your search on medicines that work the same way.

This is especially important if you're taking more than one medicine for a particular condition. Many people with type 2 diabetes take two or three medicines. How can they know what to buy, to replace what they're missing, if they don't know what that medicine does?

Doctors won't normally tell you this information, unless you ask. But if you do ask, every one I've talked with is more than willing to share that information. Patient education is an important part of their job, even if they are usually too rushed to devote much time in doing so.

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Stockpile Meds

It is extremely difficult to stockpile medicines in today's world. Even if you have a great relationship with your doctor and they are willing to write you a prescription for a year's worth of meds, your insurance won't pay for that. You'll have to pay it out of pocket.

Even so, there are a couple of options to consider, when it comes to having an emergency supply of medicines. One is to buy one of the custom-made kits from Jase Medical. I've never priced them, but I imagine that they're pretty expensive. Another is to go to one of the online pharmacies, many of which have medical staff available, who will write you a prescription. However, in both of these cases, it appears that you're only able to get about a month's worth of your meds, without having to go back.

I've long advocated the possibility of buying a stockpile of medicines in Mexico. I spent 20 years there and have had very good results with their medicines. Basically, they are generic versions of meds that you can buy here; but at a very reasonable price. You can buy most things over the counter in Mexican pharmacies and the pharmacists are trained, able to look at what you're taking and offer you the equivalent.

There is a shortfall in the idea of buying medicines in Mexico. That is that medicines made by the American pharmaceutical industry are always patented. That means they are unable to produce them in Mexico. The medication has to be out for 20 years, before the patent expires. Older medicines are readily available.

If you have a good relationship with your doctor, you can ask

them for an older equivalent for the things they prescribe for you. They'll probably want to know why, so that's why you need that good relationship. But I've known of a number of doctors who were willing to work with their patients, understanding their concern and desire to prepare for a time when they can't get their meds.

Keep Your Old Meds

I know I'm going against conventional medical wisdom here, but it's a good idea to keep your old medications.¹ There are many times when a doctor will prescribe a stronger dose of the same medicine, making the old one "obsolete." Another way this happens is that they prescribe something that is a combination of two different medications that the patient is already taking. In either case, the old medicine can be used in a pinch. You might have to take twice as many pills to get the same dosage; but that will still work.

There are also cases where the doctor replaces an older medicine with something newer. Switching back to the old one in such cases is riskier, especially if you don't understand the mechanism by which the medicines work. Nevertheless, when an emergency happens and you are out of your normal meds, you need to ask yourself the question, "Am I better off taking the old medicine or not taking anything at all?" I'll leave it to you to come up with your own answer.

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Find Herbal Alternatives

Our modern pharmaceutical industry actually grew out of herbal medicines, although I doubt any of them will admit that now. As recently as the late 1800s, many doctors had an extensive knowledge of herbal medicine and would gather their own plants to use in the making of medicines. This was a transitional time, when doctors used both natural and man-made cures for their patients.

While not mainstream, there are a fair number of people today who believe strongly in herbal medicines, recognizing them as the root of modern medicine. For our purposes, growing plants which have medicinal purposes makes sense. We can easily add them to our existing vegetable garden. Some might already be growing there.

Please keep in mind that taking the wrong mix of herbal medicines can be just as dangerous as taking the wrong mix of pharmaceuticals. You want to research the specific herbs you are planning to use, doing your research through well-established books and websites. Like anything else, there is both good and bad information out there. Care must be taken to find the good.

¹ Please note that I am not a medical doctor. Please check out the ideas I'm presenting for yourself, so that you can make the best decisions for your particular needs.