

Living With Chronic Disease After Disaster

In any crisis scenario, one of the first priorities is providing emergency care. However, a lot of this care is focused mostly on tending to injuries and common diseases.

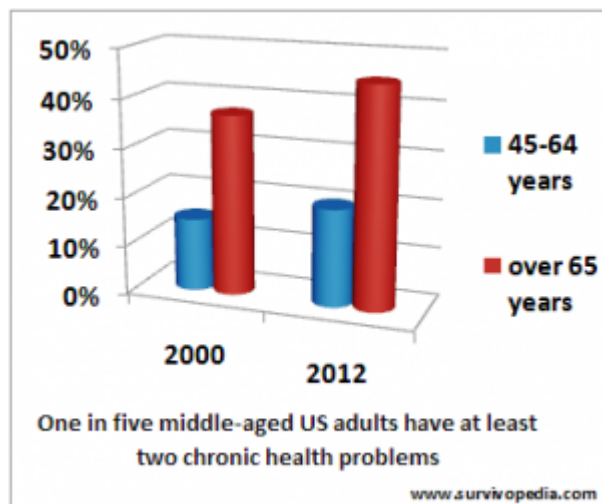
While other medical issues are also planned for, they are not considered a priority. This presents a big problem to many older adults who suffer from a chronic illness such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease.

Middle-aged and [older adults are the most vulnerable in the event of a disaster](#). Around 80% of them have to cope with at least one chronic disease on a regular basis.

Add to that the fact that the aging process makes them naturally frailer. This means that it is far more likely that they will need special medical care after SHTF than the younger and healthier people. Even so, priority is given to acute conditions such as physical injuries and infections.

This approach needs to be changed. Disasters have a disproportionate effect on older adults. Even though they make up a small bit of the population, they are often the most affected group.

How Disaster Affects Chronic Disease Patients



Living with chronic disease can impose a lot of physical limitations. Diabetes, arthritis and heart disease are just a few examples. However, these are some of the leading causes that limit activity in older adults.

Their illnesses prevent these people from performing a lot of basic activities of daily living, also known as ADLs. These can include moving around, dressing, eating, bathing etc. Under normal circumstances, many of them require aid on a regular basis.

In a SHTF scenario, their conditions can get worse. This can happen due to stress, lack of proper food or water, and exposure to extreme temperatures. All of these issues can cause a chronic disease to worsen very rapidly. This can happen even if the condition was kept under control prior to the disaster.

Other common problems in this situation include a lack of necessary medication or medical treatment. Moreover, nutrition is also an issue. Disaster victims are often provided Meal, Ready-to-Eat (MRE) packages. However, these are rich in fat and sodium, a problem for many chronic disease sufferers.

How to Prepare

Knowing that people with chronic diseases are more vulnerable than others during a disaster can actually be beneficial. If you are among them, this can be the motivator to properly prepare yourself for such an event. Information is power. The more informed you are, the better you can prepare.

Your first decision should be whether you will stay in or get out after a disaster. This decision is based on how well each scenario can attend to a few basic needs, including daily living items, supplies, mobility and aid.

Daily living means items necessary for personal care (clothes, grooming tools, bathing supplies etc.), but it can also include special utensils and equipment used to treat your chronic illness. They shouldn't pose a big problem whether you decide to stay in or bug out, but it will be easier to stock up on them if you stay in, though.

Next issue is supplies, mostly referring to food, clean water and medical supplies. This does not take your disaster kit into account. A disaster kit should be filled with the supplies you need to survive the initial period after a catastrophe. However, it is possible for the kit to be exhausted. In this scenario, you need to decide which situation makes it easier for you to obtain new supplies.

The other two problems are mobility and aid. It is usually easier to move around the house because you have access to mobility aids. Extensive traveling outside can pose a problem: in a disaster, it is common for the transportation network to be damaged. Aid refers to your ability to seek outside help, and this can be from friends, family or community responders.

Once you take all these factors into account, you can make an informed decision whether to stay in or leave the home after a disaster.



Creating Your Disaster Kit

After a catastrophic event, your disaster kit can be your best friend, and it can also, literally, be a lifesaver. This kit should contain everything you need to survive following a SHTF situation. The best part is that you are the person assembling the kit. If you have a chronic disease, you can pack all of the items particular to your needs. Basic supplies for the kit include: several days worth of food and water, first aid kit, clothing, flashlight, matches, batteries, portable TV or radio, cash and copies of important documents.

If you have a chronic disease, the kit should include a few weeks worth of medication. This also refers to medical equipment you might need. All of the medically relevant information should be included in the kit. This refers to health insurance, medical history, contact information etc.

You should also wear a medical ID bracelet at all times. It can save your life if you are in a situation where you cannot communicate, and will alert first responders to your chronic condition and special needs.

People with chronic disease usually have dietary restrictions. This is something to keep in mind when assembling your kit. You should pack food which is healthy for you. At the same time, pack food you enjoy. This can make a bad situation a little better. Furthermore, you can simply eat the food once its expiration date approaches. Be sure to replace it, though.

Life after the Event



There is no way to tell how long it will take you to recover after a disaster. This is true for your entire community, also.

As mentioned above, various factors associated with disaster can exacerbate your chronic condition. That is why one of your main priorities after this kind of event is to [get your condition under control](#) again.

Best way to do this is to stick to your regular treatment. You should look to obtain more medication as soon as you can in case your disaster kit supply runs out.

Moreover, you should also schedule a consultation with your doctor as soon as possible. He will be the best person to determine how the disaster has affected your condition.

Once you begin to recover, your life with chronic illness should return to how it was. You can't really expect the condition to improve.

Just maintaining your health through such an ordeal is difficult. It is important to look at this experience as a learning opportunity, and see what you did wrong and what you did right during the event. This can help you better prepare for the future.

This BUG Could Turn U.S. Into A Third World Country

WATCH VIDEO



*This article has been written by **Bella Scotton** for [Survivopedia](#).*

Photo source: [Dreamstime](#).