



Tips for preparing cancer patients and caregivers for an emergency

Author: Dr. Maricelly Santiago Ortiz
Researcher, cancer educator and health communicator
Alivia Health

Atmospheric events give cancer patients a sense of uncertainty because their life is in danger due to their condition. This is why the most powerful tools for making the right decisions for both the cancer patient and their caregiver are guidance, the preparation of a good contingency plan, and a care plan that takes into account hygiene and nutrition. In general, patients who are at high risk of being more susceptible in this emergency process are: patients who are currently receiving treatments with immunosuppressive agents during the last 3 months or active chemotherapy, patients with hematological malignancies (blood), patients with a history of bone marrow transplantation, patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the metastasis stage receiving active treatment or patients who are participating in clinical trials of new treatments to combat cancer.

Encouraging the patient and caregiver to be proactive in the midst of this process will greatly help to reduce the uncertainty of any atmospheric event. It is suggested that family members prepare the "Survival Package" together. In this Survival Package, they must include a list of items that are necessary to avoid improvisation during an emergency situation such as personal identification with photo, social security, name of emergency contacts, flashlights, batteries, cell phone, charger, house keys, car keys, cash, credit card or bank account information. No less important, in said Survivorship Package the cancer patient or caregiver must include:

- ✔ Common hygiene items.
- ✔ Copy of the patient's medical plan and cancer policy.
- ✔ Information from the treatment center and their oncologist.
- ✔ List of other diseases exhibited by the cancer patient (high blood pressure, diabetes).
- ✔ Copy of the most recent lab results that have been carried out.
- ✔ A list with the names of all the prescribed drugs and access to their refill prescriptions. It is vital that the patient ask the doctor for the physical prescription at each visit, even if the doctor sends it electronically to the pharmacy so that the patient can purchase the medication at another pharmacy if necessary.
- ✔ A "survival plan" of all the information pertaining to the patient's medical condition. For example: type of cancer, when it was diagnosed, what treatments have been received, what dosages have been prescribed, what specialists have treated it. The benefit of having this plan written down is that it makes it easier for a new doctor in an emergency to understand the patient's profile and to continue treatment successfully.
- ✔ Devices that keep medicines or insulated refrigerators (gel pads) at temperature.

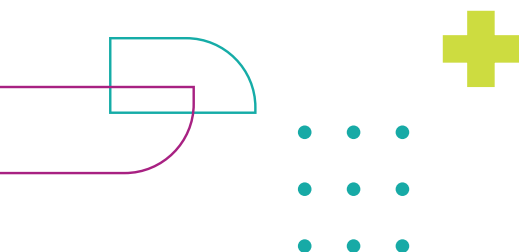
It is suggested that cancer patients do not stop their cancer treatments under any circumstances. Each specialist will take action on this matter so that the treatments are not compromised by either rescheduling the treatment or covering the patient with oral medications. In addition, it is suggested that before the emergency, the patient should talk with a representative of their medical coverage and tell them if the patient will be staying at their house, away from home with a relative or at a shelter. This suggestion should be carried out in case the patient needs to be relocated because their main treatment

center is not able to provide medical services after the disaster. In that scenario, your insurance company may also offer special services to help those who have been removed from their homes.

Once again, caregivers become essential in taking the appropriate measures and in developing a hygiene and care action plan together with the patient. The caregiver must treat and care for this patient taking into consideration that their patient may have a fragile immune system and could be susceptible to viral or bacterial infections. That is why the following tips are suggested to caregivers taking care of cancer patients:

- ✔ Identify a room just for the cancer patient that has its own bathroom.
- ✔ Practice social distancing with your patient.
- ✔ Promote the disinfection of all surfaces and establish more rigorous personal hygiene practices (wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds and do not touch your face, eyes or nose).
- ✔ Strengthen the immune system (good eating and rest habits).
- ✔ Reduce intake of foods with high fat, sugar, seasoning or salt content and prepare refrigerated meals in advance before the emergency.
- ✔ Fruits and vegetables must be washed with clean water.
- ✔ Only consume clean water, otherwise boil the water for a full minute.

It is recommended that the patient be able to speak in advance with a family member or trusted contact if they need to be transferred to a shelter. The patient must take into account that in case of having to be evicted because they do not have a close relative and must go to a shelter, they must immediately contact the shelter leader and explain their condition, their status and at what stage of their treatment plan they are. Some shelters have separate areas for people with special medical needs, disabilities or for susceptible populations. Get ready and take action with contingency plans!



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