

Disaster preparedness

The recent bombings in London and the threat of hurricane Dennis bearing down on the coast of Florida in July, prompted me to address the topic of emergency preparedness.

As an agency providing home care services to individuals who are confined to their home, the Walpole Area VNA has a plan which would ensure that the health care needs of our clients would be met in the event of an emergency.

Emergencies can happen at any time, and therefore, everyone should have a plan. If you are someone who has difficulty moving about, rely on medical equipment, or have other special health related needs, emergencies can be especially challenging.

Planning ahead reduces concern and anxiety if emergencies do arise.

Disasters of any kind may interfere with your ability to obtain food, water, or medications, and may interrupt power sources and telephone service. It is, therefore, important to keep certain supplies on hand, such as the following:

- water
- canned or packaged food
- medicines
- battery operated radio and batteries
- flashlight
- first aid kit
- non-electric can opener
- cash or traveler's checks

In addition, consider the following suggestions. If you rely on electrically powered medical equipment, ask suppliers about other power sources or battery packs. Keep emergency phone numbers current and posted in a convenient location. Know how to turn off the water, gas and electricity in your home. Pack a bag of essentials and have it ready in the event of an evacuation. Don't let your supplies of food, fuel and medication get too low. During and after a disaster or bad storm, listen to the radio for advice and information from your local government on ways to manage afterwards. Learn what to do in the event of severe winter weather, flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes or utilities failure.

We like to think "it" "will never happen to us. What we should be thinking is what should we know and do in order to be prepared in case "it" does.