

# EARTHQUAKE TIPS FOR SENIORS



- Keep a one-week supply of all prescription medications on hand at all times. Refill your prescriptions ahead of time to maintain this supply in reserve, always using up the oldest medicines first.
- People who have had cataract surgery or who have poor eyesight should obtain a reserve pair of glasses. Store these in an accessible spot in your home where they will be well cushioned in case of an earthquake. A good selection is built-in drawers, like kitchen or bathroom drawers. Glasses should be well cushioned with dishtowels, hand towels, or clothing items, in case the drawer is jarred.
- Put all medications in to one container so that they will be easily retrieved in the event of a disaster. A lightweight plastic fishing tackle box, a large cosmetic bag with a zipper, or similar container that will hold all the bottles, syringes, and other administering measuring devices. Be sure to include a complete schedule for administration of these medications in the container, in case you are injured and require medical aid. Knowing your medications and their schedule/dosage will greatly assist medical personnel in caring for you.
- Keep a spare set of hearing aid batteries in reserve in the refrigerator. When the set you are using wears out, use the reserve batteries, and replace the set immediately. This way, your reserve set is always fresh.
- Keep drinking water in reserve. Store it in a dark place to prolong usable life. Secure your hot water heater, so it will not fall over in an earthquake. A water heater serves as an excellent supply of portable water after an earthquake. Make sure you know how to operate the drain on the bottom of the tank. Check the water occasionally for mineral or sediment build-up and drain the water

heater as needed to maintain a fresh water condition. Keep a tea strainer for filtering the water before drinking.

- Remove all disinfectants from your toilet tanks and rinse the tanks. These are a good source of clean water for washing, but if they have “bluing” in them, the water will not be useful.
- In the event of an earthquake, sewer systems may be unusable for some time. Keep a supply of heavy-duty trash bags to use for sanitation. You can line your toilets with a plastic trash bag, place a little pine oil disinfectant in it, and have an effective alternative to the sewer system. Plan on several bags per day, at least two for each person in the household.
- Organize neighborhood “self-help” groups among your neighbors and friends. Plan for your signaling system; investigate the public resources that will be available to you immediately after an earthquake, such as a Red Cross Shelter at a neighborhood school. Remember that in an earthquake the normal operation of all public safety services will be interrupted - they will be victims of the earth’s movement too. Also, those units that are available will be needed to put out fires, check on hazardous material spills, search for collapsed buildings and trapped people, and other special projects. A call to “9-1-1” may not bring a three minute response. You and your neighbors should plan self-help for immediate cleanup of debris blocking essential routes for first aid and basic medical assistance (perhaps someone is a nurse, technician, former medic in the Army, or a certified first aide). If not, organize a first aid class through the American Red Cross. For communications, in case phone lines are down, HAM and CB hobbyists are a great resource! For information on neighborhood self-help organizing, contact the City of Irvine Emergency Management Section at (949) 724-7148.

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