

# What If...No Power?

Power outage is the most common type of utility disruption. Sudden power outages can be frustrating and troublesome, especially when they last a long time. Your biggest concerns as a dialysis patient should be:

- Dialysis Treatment
- Food Safety and Preservation
- Body Temperature

**Dialyze ahead of weather!**

## Dialysis Treatment

Dialysis machines need power to run. Most people do not have backup generators. Peritoneal dialysis (PD) can be done manually. Warm bath water and your own body heat can help warm PD fluid for exchanges. Depending on the severity of the outage, your facility may make in-center arrangements for those who do home hemodialysis (HHD), or even PD. Treatment might have to be scheduled at another center. You need to keep in touch with them.

- Update your contact information with your facility.
- Get emergency numbers from your facility.
- Listen to the radio for updates (make sure you have extra batteries!)
- Keep your stock of supplies up.
- See about getting on a special priority list with your power company.

## Food Safety and Preservation

If a power outage is 2 hours or less, don't be concerned about losing your perishable foods. For prolonged power outages:

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. First use perishable food from the refrigerator. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold for about 4 hours.
- Then use food from the freezer. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.
- Use your non-perishable foods and staples after using food from the refrigerator and freezer.
- If it looks like the power outage will continue beyond a day, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items.

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## Body Temperature

If power is lost **during extreme heat**, be aware of yours and others' risk for heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and fainting. To avoid heat stress, you should:

- People with normal kidney function should drink a glass of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes and at least one gallon each day. **CONSULT YOUR DIETITIAN ABOUT YOUR FLUID NEEDS.**
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine. They both dehydrate the body.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Take frequent cool showers or baths.
- If you feel dizzy, weak, or overheated, go to a cool place. Sit or lie down, drink water, and wash your face with cool water. If you don't feel better soon, get medical help quickly.

If power failure occurs **during cold weather**, be aware of risk for hypothermia.

Hypothermia happens when a person's core body temperature is lower than 35°C (95°F). To avoid hypothermia:

- Cover up with layers of blankets, quilts, and sleeping bags.
- Wear layers of clothing, even on your feet. Wear a hat all the time, even while sleeping. **Avoid tight clothing when you're layering - it doesn't leave pockets of air to be trapped for insulation.**
- Move around. Physical activity raises body temperature.
- If it's very cold and you're not sure how long you will be without heat from your furnace, cut down on the size of the area you are trying to heat. Pull all your family, pets, blankets, and pillows into one room. Do all your living in that room.
- Close all the doors to the rooms not being used to conserve heat. Put up drapes where there are no doors.

**For more information about what to do in a power outage, visit:**

Red Cross: [www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/power-outage](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/power-outage)

Ready.Gov: [www.ready.gov/food](http://www.ready.gov/food)

Family Survival Planning: [www.family-survival-planning.com/emergency-heating.html](http://www.family-survival-planning.com/emergency-heating.html)