



## MY SUPPORT TEAM

People on your support team are those who: can listen and communicate well, are detail-oriented, dependable and calm. Friends, neighbors, family members, and acquaintances from community groups and activities (PVA Chapter, place of worship, gym, civic organization, etc...) can be part of your support team.



DONE	ACTION ITEM	NOTES
	I have identified a support team.	Make sure you have everyone's first and last name, address, cell phone number, and email.
	I know how to ask for help if my support team is not available.	Have contact information for your healthcare team such as the outpatient clinic nurse or social worker, home health agency, and vendors who take care of your medical equipment.
	I have more than one person ready to help me in an emergency.	Consider someone that is trustworthy, dependable, kind and calm.
	I can tell my support team what I need.	Write a list of clear and specific directions for each task you need help with. Include such things as what needs to be done, the location of items needed to complete the task, and troubleshooting tips.

## MY PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT (PCA) OR CAREGIVER

Your PCA or Caregiver is the person who most likely helps you maintain the independence of living in your own home. Look for someone who is trustworthy and will listen to you. If you're seeking a PCA, most agencies train their employees, perform background checks, and can usually find a back-up PCA in case your regular attendant is not available. Make sure the agency is aware of your specific needs so they can send the correct person.



DONE	ACTION ITEM	NOTES
	When identifying a PCA or Caregiver, I ask about their availability to help me during an emergency.	Does the person rely on public transportation? Is the person a student who might go out of town during an emergency?
	I keep a list of emergency PCAs/Caregivers.	Keep a written list of emergency PCAs/ Caregivers posted on your refrigerator door and in your cell phone.
	I review with my PCA/Caregiver and support team the locations of important items.	Important items include: contact information for your healthcare team, medical equipment and supplies (oxygen, shower chair, lift, wheelchair, urinary catheters etc...).
	I review with my PCA/Caregiver and support team the operation of my medical equipment.	Have operation manuals and vendor contact information handy in case troubleshooting is needed.

## STAYING PREPARED

Unforeseen events can happen at any time and last for a few hours, days, weeks, or possibly months. Try your best to always stay prepared in the event that something happens to disrupt your care routine.



DONE	ACTION ITEM	NOTES
	Get an annual evaluation at your VA SCI/D Hub every year. Visit: <a href="https://www.sci.va.gov/VAs_SCID_System_of_Care.asp">https://www.sci.va.gov/VAs_SCID_System_of_Care.asp</a>	An annual evaluation allows your healthcare team to know your needs and provide you with medications, equipment, and other support items to keep you healthy.
	Try to keep at least a 30-day supply of prescription medications on hand.	During your annual evaluation, talk with your SCI doctor and pharmacist to help you plan and ask about disaster management planning. Special arrangements may need to happen if you are taking controlled substances.
	Keep a stockpile of over-the-counter medications handy.	Consider keeping pain relievers, cold and allergy medications, antacids, and topical creams for cuts and rashes. Rotate the stock and check expiration dates twice a year.
	Keep a list of emergency information.	Include your name, DOB, medication list, allergies, chronic medical conditions, communication difficulties, preferred treatment, equipment needs, medical providers and emergency contacts.
	Have a 30-day supply of personal care and sanitation supplies on hand.	This includes everything you need to complete bowel/bladder care.
	Keep your cell phone charged and within reach at all times.	Consider purchasing a portable cell phone charger.
	Make sure your power wheelchair and other medical equipment is charged at all times.	If you don't have a back-up generator to power your medical equipment, is there a neighbor who does and is willing to charge your items?
	Make sure you have a functional back up wheelchair.	Contact your local VA hospital to inquire about your wheelchair needs.
	Check to see if your cell phone can receive wireless emergency alerts (WEA).	WEA are emergency messages sent automatically to your cell phone from authorized government agencies. Older cell phones may not be able to receive emergency alerts. Check with your wireless service carrier to see if your phone is WEA-capable.
	Sign up for local emergency alerts.	Many cities and counties have an emergency alert system. You must do an Internet search and sign up to receive these alerts.