



2023

# NORTH SHORE HEALTH DEPARTMENT HEALTHY HIGHLIGHTS

Serving the communities of Bayside, Brown Deer, Fox Point, Glendale, River Hills, Shorewood and Whitefish Bay

## August 30, 2023: Preparing Older Adults for Emergencies

Every year, the month of September is recognized as **National Preparedness Month**, serving as a reminder for individuals, families, and communities to be proactive in their efforts to stay safe and resilient in the face of emergencies. The ongoing challenges posed by natural disasters, public health crises, and other unforeseen events emphasize the importance of being prepared. This year, **preparing older adults for emergencies** is the primary focus of National Preparedness Month.

Older adults can face greater risks when it comes to extreme weather events and emergencies, especially if they are living alone, are low-income, have a disability, or live in rural areas. In the North Shore, **19.4% of the population is 65 years of age or older**, compared to 17.0% statewide (ACS, 2021), making the focus on older adults this year particularly pertinent for our communities.

As a community, we have the opportunity to unite and ensure that our seniors have access to the resources, information, and support necessary to weather any storm.

### Steps for older adults to be more prepared:

- Sign up for North Shore area emergency alerts - [Notify Me](#)
- Plan how you will [communicate](#) if you have a communications need.
- Plan for [food](#), [water](#), and [essentials](#) for your and [pets or service animals](#).
- Plan for your transportation if you need help evacuating.
- Include items that [meet your individual needs](#), such as medicines, medical supplies, batteries and chargers, in your [emergency supply kit](#).
- Plan how you will have your assistive devices with you during an evacuation. Be sure to have the contact information for your durable medical equipment ([DME](#)) provider accessible.

- [Make copies](#) of Medicaid, Medicare, and other insurance cards.
- If you depend on Social Security or other regular benefits, switching to electronic payments is a simple, important way to protect yourself financially before disaster strikes. It also eliminates the risk of stolen checks. The U.S. Department of the Treasury recommends two safer ways to get federal benefits:
  - Direct deposit to a checking or savings account. If you get federal benefits you can sign up by calling 800-333-1795 or [sign up online](#).
  - The **Direct Express®** prepaid debit card is designed as a safe and easy alternative to paper.
- Build a support network by identifying friends, family, neighbors and/or care providers who may be able to assist you in an emergency. Discuss with them how they are able to help you in an emergency and ensure you have a communication plan set with them.

Check out these [additional resources and tips](#) from Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

By taking the initiative to prepare ourselves and the older adults in our community, we contribute to a more resilient and responsive North Shore. National Preparedness Month serves as a call to action, reminding us that preparedness today can make all the difference tomorrow.



## MEDICATION DEACTIVATION AND DISPOSAL

Keep safe with medication and prescription drug deactivation and disposal items.

To keep our community safe, it's important to dispose of expired or unused medications properly. Improper disposal can harm the environment, including plants, animals, humans, and the water supply. Mixing or combining medicines can create harmful substances. These harmful substances can lead to sickness or hurt the environment. It can also get into drinking water, which into drinking water can create harmful substances when combined together, but if a treatment plant cannot remove chemicals from drinking water, bacteria can be harder to treat and cause sickness.

Ways to safely deactivate and dispose include:

- **Community Drug Take Back Days:** Bring your unused or expired medicines to these special events. Check for dates and locations near you.
- **Drop-off Locations:** Visit your local police department or other collection sites to safely drop off medications.
- **To find a disposal event or site:** Call 1-800-882-9539, visit the [DEA Diversion Control Division Registration Call Center Website](#) or search "drug disposal near me" or "medication disposal near me" on [Google Maps](#)
- **Use Safe Disposal Products:** Safe disposal products deactivate chemicals in medications and drugs, including over-the-counter ones. **Disposal products are available for FREE at both offices (Brown Deer office: 4800 W Green Brook Dr., Shorewood office: 2010 E Shorewood Blvd.).**

### DRUG AND MEDICATION DISPOSAL PRODUCTS

KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE WITH

DETERRA DRUG DEACTIVATION BAGS

DISPOSERX PACKETS

Unused prescription drugs pose a risk of misuse and accidental poisoning, but improper disposal can harm the environment and contaminate the water supply. Once medication is no longer needed or expired, dispose of unused pills, capsules, or liquid using the bags or packets.



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### RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

1. US Census, 2021 American Community Survey (ACS).
2. Prepare for Emergencies Now: Information for Older Americans [brochure](#)
3. Make a Plan: [www.ready.gov/plan](http://www.ready.gov/plan)
4. [Deterra Drug Disposal System](#)
5. [DisposeRx, Inc. - Medication Disposal](#)
6. [Drug Take Back Locations](#)