

Emergency Preparedness Pointers



Food and Water in an Emergency

If an earthquake, flood, winter storm or other disaster strikes our community, you might not have access to food, water or electricity for days, and in some cases, perhaps weeks. Outside help will be on its way, but it could take some time to get here. By taking time now to store emergency food and water supplies, you will be not only providing for your family but helping to reduce the stress that a disaster can bring.

Water

You can't exist very long without water. It's essential to life. Having an ample supply of clean water is a top priority in an emergency. Aside from drinking water, you will also need water for food preparation and hygiene. Store at least one gallon of water per person, per day.

Water Storage

- ✓ Store your water in clean plastic containers.
- ✓ Store your water in a cool, dark and dry place. Avoid storing containers directly on cement. Lead from the cement could pass through the container into the water.
- ✓ Replace your stored home-tap water every six months. Store bought, sealed water, every year.



Alternate Sources

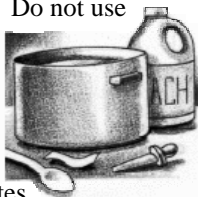
If a disaster catches you without a stored supply of clean water, you can use the water in your hot-water heater, ice cubes, and as a last resort, you can even use the water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (not the bowl).

Ways to Purify Water

There are many ways to purify water. None are perfect. Often the best solution is a combination of methods. Two of the easiest and most common methods are outlined below. These measures kill most microbes, but will not remove other possible contaminants such as heavy metals, salts and most chemicals. Before purifying, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towels or a clean cloth.

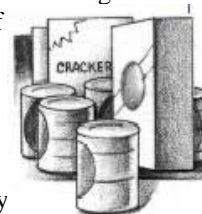
Boiling: Boiling is the safest method of purification. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes. Keep in mind that some will evaporate.

Disinfection: You can use household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular liquid bleach that contains 5.25% sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented, color safe, or bleaches with added cleaners. Add 16 drops per gallon of water, and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.



Food

Food is important. Many of us could survive without it for several days, but the energy and psychological comfort it provides are essential in times of crisis. Even though it is unlikely that an emergency would cut off your food supply for a week or two, you should prepare supplies to last that long.



Food Selection

- ✓ Store nonperishable foods.
- ✓ Familiar foods are important. They can lift moral and give a feeling of security.
- ✓ Avoid foods that require much water to prepare or are heavily salted and make you thirsty.
- ✓ Canned foods work best. Glass jars and bottles can break easily. *Do not forget a manual can opener.*
- ✓ Include emergency food for your pets.

Storage Tips

- ✓ Keep food in a dry, cool, dark place.
- ✓ Keep food covered at all times.
- ✓ Empty packages of sugar, dried fruits or nuts into screw-top plastic jars or cans to protect them from insects or rodents.
- ✓ Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags and keep them in tight containers.
- ✓ Rotate supplies at least once a year.



Shelf Life of Foods for Storage

Here are some guidelines for rotating common emergency foods stored in proper containers and conditions:

Use within six months:

- ✓ Powdered milk (boxed)
- ✓ Dried fruit
- ✓ Crackers
- ✓ Potatoes

Use within one year:

- ✓ Canned meat & soups
- ✓ Canned fruit, juice & veggies
- ✓ Ready to eat & instant cereals
- ✓ Peanut Butter
- ✓ Jelly
- ✓ Nuts and candy

May be stored indefinitely:

- ✓ Wheat
- ✓ Rice
- ✓ Dried corn
- ✓ Dry pasta
- ✓ Powdered milk (canned)
- ✓ Instant coffee, tea and cocoa
- ✓ Bouillon products
- ✓ Noncarbonated soft drinks