

Disaster Preparedness

Food and Water



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How to Store Water

It is best to store bottled mineral water.

Seal water containers tightly, label them and store in a cool, dark place. Rotate water every six months.

Outdoor Water Sources

If you need to find water outside your home, you can use outdoor sources. Be sure to purify the water according to the instructions on page 3 before drinking it.

- Rainwater
- Streams, rivers and other moving bodies of water
- Ponds and lakes
- Natural springs

Avoid water with floating material, an odor or dark color. Use saltwater only if you distil it first. You should not drink flood water.

If an earthquake, strong winds, winter storm or other disaster strikes your region, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. By taking some time now to store emergency food and water supplies, you can provide for your entire family for similar situations.

Having enough clean water is a top priority in an emergency. A normally active person needs to drink at least two liters of water each day. High temperatures can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need even more. You will also need water for food preparation and hygiene. Store a total of at least 4 liters per person, per day. You should store at least a two-week supply of water for each member of your family.



If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need, and try to find more for the following day. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and keeping moderate body temperature.

FOOD SUPPLIES



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Short-Term Food Supplies

Even though it is unlikely that an emergency would cut off your food supply for two weeks, you should prepare a supply that will last that long.

The easiest way to develop a two-week stockpile is to increase the amount of basic foods you normally keep at home.

Storage Tips

- Keep food in a dry, cool spot - a dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans carefully so that you can close them tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in tight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker. Place new items behind older ones.

Nutrition Tips

During and right after a disaster, it will be vital that you maintain your strength. So remember:

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (two liters a day).
- Take in enough calories to enable you to do any necessary work.
- Include vitamin, mineral and protein supplements in your stockpile to assure adequate nutrition.

Hidden Water Sources in Your Home

If a disaster catches you without a stored supply of clean water, you can use the water in your hot-water tank, pipes and ice cubes. Do you know the location of your incoming water valve? You will need to shut it off to stop contaminated water from entering your home if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines.

To use the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet in your house at the highest level. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the house.

To use the water in your hot-water tank, be sure the electricity or gas is off, and open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve and turning on a hot-water faucet. Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty.

When Food Supplies Are Low

If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for a long period and without any food for many days. Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women.

If your water supply is limited, try to avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't stock salty foods, since they will make you thirsty. Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content.

You do not need to go out and buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply. You can use the canned foods, dry mixes and other staples you usually have at home. In fact, familiar foods are important. They can lift morale and give a feeling of security in time of stress. Also, canned foods will not require cooking, water or special preparation. Following are recommended short-term food storage plans.



Pay Special Attention To

As you stock food, take into account your family's unique needs and tastes. Try to include foods that they will enjoy and that are also high in calories and nutrition. Foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking are best.

Individuals with special diets and allergies will need particular attention, as will babies, toddlers and elderly people. Nursing mothers may need artificial milk, in case they are unable to nurse. Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups may be helpful for ill or elderly people.

Make sure you have a manual can opener and other necessary utensils. And do not forget nonperishable foods for your pets.

How to Cook If the Power Goes Out

For emergency cooking you can use a fireplace, a charcoal grill or camp stove outdoors. If you have to heat food indoors and cannot use the above mentioned, be sure you have enough dry alcohol. Canned food can be eaten right out of the can. If you heat it in the can, be sure to open the can and remove the label first.

Three Ways to Purify Water

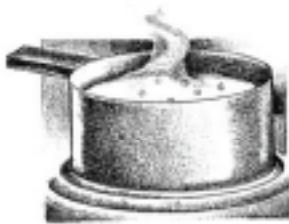
In addition to having a bad odor and taste, contaminated water can contain microorganisms that cause diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis. You should purify all water of uncertain purity before using it for drinking, food preparation or hygiene.

There are many ways to purify water. None is perfect. Often the best solution is a combination of methods.

Two easy purification methods are outlined below. These measures will kill most microbes but will not remove other contaminants such as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals. Before purifying, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towel or clean cloth.

BOILING. Boiling is the safest method of purifying water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking.

Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This will also improve the taste of stored water.



DISINFECTION. You can use common liquid bleach to remove micro-organisms. Use only regular bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented bleaches, colorsafe bleaches or bleaches with added cleaners.

Add 16 drops of bleach per 4 liters of water, stir 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.



The only agent used to purify water should be common liquid bleach. Other chemicals, such as iodine or water treatment products sold in camping or surplus stores that do not contain 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite as the only active ingredient, are not recommended and should not be used.

While the two methods described above will kill most microbes in water, distillation will remove microbes that resist these methods, and heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals.

DISTILLATION. Distillation involves boiling water and then collecting the vapor that condenses back to water. The condensed vapor will not include salt and other impurities. To distill, fill a pot halfway with water. Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right-side-up when the lid is upside-down (make sure the cup is not dangling into the water) and boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled.



FOOD STORAGE



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Durability of Foods for Storage

It is best to look for expiration dates when purchasing food for your supply kit. Because of storage conditions, it is best to check the food in your supply kit every three months. Here are some general guidelines for rotating your common emergency food reserves.

- You can store for six months:
 - Powdered milk (*boxed*)
 - Dried fruit (*in metal container*)
 - Dry, crisp crackers (*in metal container*)
 - Potatoes
- You can store for one year:
 - Canned condensed meat/ fish and vegetable soups
 - Canned fruits, fruit juices and vegetables
 - Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals (*in metal containers*)
 - Peanut butter
 - Jelly
 - Hard candy and canned nuts
 - Vitamin C
- You can store the following food products until their expiration dates (*in proper containers and conditions*):
 - Wheat
 - Vegetable oils
 - Dried corn
 - Baking powder
 - Soybeans
 - Instant coffee, tea and cocoa
 - Salt
 - Noncarbonated soft drinks
 - White rice
 - Bouillon products
 - Dry pasta
 - Powdered milk (*in nitrogen-packed cans*)

Supplies

It is 2:00 a.m. and a flash flood forces you to quickly evacuate your home. There is no time to gather food from the kitchen, fill bottles with water, grab a first-aid kit from the closet and snatch a flashlight and a portable radio from the bedroom. You need to have these items packed and ready in one place before disaster strikes.

Pack at least a three-day supply of food and water, and store it in a handy place. Choose foods that are easy to carry, nutritious and ready-to-eat. Pack the following emergency items:

- Medical supplies and a first aid manual
- Hygiene materials
- Portable radio, flashlights and extra batteries
- Shovel and other useful tools
- Household liquid bleach to purify drinking water
- Money and matches in a waterproof container
- Water (or powder) Fire Extinguisher
- Blanket and extra clothing
- Materials for infant and small children's needs (if appropriate)
- Manual can opener

Learn More. Have a First Aid and CPR class.

Contact your local BRC Branch for more information regarding First Aid and CPR classes.

For more information contact your local Civil Protection and BRC Branch.

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In a disaster, you might be cut off from food, water and electricity for days. By preparing emergency provisions, you can turn what could be a life-threatening situation into a manageable problem.

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