

A Guide to Home Preparedness

Ensure peace of mind, knowing you can care for your loved ones, no matter what comes your way.

If there were an emergency tomorrow, would you be ready? Approximately 71 percent of Americans don't have a natural disaster preparedness plan, while 48 percent have no emergency supplies on hand.

Most emergencies won't be catastrophic. However, they can involve a sudden financial crisis that drains your savings and disrupts your income; a widespread utility failure that leaves your area without power or water; severe

weather events that cause property damage and food shortages; or infectious disease outbreaks that lead to mandatory home quarantine measures.

Disasters are unpredictable; preparation isn't. Taking small steps today can

give you peace of mind for tomorrow.

Below is what you need to last two weeks in an emergency.

Medically reviewed by Jimmy Almond, MD

KEY PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

1. The Rule of Threes:

Most people can survive



3 minutes without air



3 days without water



3 weeks without food

2. Stay Hydrated: If you feel thirsty, drink water immediately to prevent dehydration.

3. When in Doubt, Throw It Out: If you're unsure about the safety of food or water, discard it.

4. Regularly Update Your Supplies: Check expiration dates and rotate supplies annually.

5. Safety First: Always prioritize your safety and the safety of your family in all situations.

ENTERTAINMENT AND COMFORT

Of course, mental health is important, too. During stressful times, having activities and comfort items can help raise everyone's spirits.

Have some board games, books, magazines, playing cards, or an e-book reader ready. If you have a spiritual or religious belief, ensure you have related materials available.

THE BASICS: THE 2-WEEK HOME SURVIVAL PLAN

A three-day emergency kit is essential for most disasters, particularly for evacuation scenarios.

However, for long-term resilience at home, it's recommended to have at least a two-week supply of essentials.

Be realistic and practical. Your goal is to survive in your home for at least two weeks without any outside help—whether from other people or the grid. That means you have to assume you will not have electricity, water, cooking or heating gas, communications, internet, emergency services, and so on.

TEST YOURSELF: CAN YOU AGREE WITH THESE STATEMENTS?

- ☐ I know what emergencies or disasters are most likely to occur in my community.
- ☐ I have a family disaster plan and have practiced it.
- ☐ I have a survival kit.
- ☐ At least one member of my household is trained in first aid and CPR/AED.
- ☐ I have taken action to help my community prepare.

CATEGORY 1: FOOD AND WATER

To err on the side of caution, add 25 percent to your total supplies. Focus on items that are nonperishable, easy to prepare, nutritionally balanced, and delicious (for morale).

Water

Ensure you have one gallon of water per person per day—enough for drinking, cooking, and basic hygiene. For a two-week supply, that's at least 14 gallons per person.



STORAGE

- Use food-grade five-gallon water storage containers, or purchase unopened BPA-free bottled water.
- Store in a cool, dark place away from chemicals and direct sunlight.
- Label your containers as "drinking water" and replace the water every six months.
- Consider installing a rainwater collection system for a reliable reservoir to meet your household's needs should local supplies be disrupted.



FILTRATION AND TREATMENT In certain emergencies, such in the event of a hurricane, finding a water source may not be a problem, but

water filtration will be.

Straw and pump filters are portable and well-suited for purifying water while on the go. These include options like LifeStraw, Sawyer Mini, or Grayl filtration systems.

Countertop filters such as gravity-fed Berkey systems are well-suited for larger water quantities at home.

Some water treatment methods can also ensure that your water is safe to consume. Boiling water for a minimum of 60 seconds is the simplest and most effective method to ensure water is safe to drink. Purification pills can also cleanse water by generating chemical reactions that eliminate hazardous microorganisms.



Disinfect water by adding eight drops of 5 to 9 percent unscented household bleach to one gallon of water. For cloudy tap water, use 16 drops. Alternatively, you can use chlorine dioxide tablets or iodine.

Never use tap water to make ice, wash dishes, cook, drink, bathe, or brush your teeth unless you know it is safe.

Food

Aim for 2,500 calories per person per day to maintain energy and health. In survival situations, this number can be decreased; however, you should always try to consume more than 1,200 calories.

Stock up on nonperishable items you regularly use, like canned goods or dried foods, focusing on foods with a shelf life of six to 12 months. As you finish them, replace them with new supplies from your stockpile.

This method is cost-effective, prevents food waste through constant cycling, and stores foods you actually eat.



GRAINS

Grains are pantry staples due to their versatility, nutrition, and long shelf life. Examples include rice (all varieties), wheat berries, oats, corn, cornmeal, flour, pasta, quinoa, instant grits, and instant mashed potatoes.



LEGUMES

Excellent sources of protein and fiber. Examples include pinto beans, black beans, kidney beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), black-eyed peas, and lentils.



FATS

Fats are crucial for energy and nutrient absorption. They also add flavor and satiety to meals. Examples include lard, peanut butter, shortening, vegetable oil, olive oil, and coconut oil.



PROTEINS*

Preserved meats offer protein and can boost morale with familiar tastes. Canned salmon, sardines, canned tuna, Spam, canned chicken, Vienna sausages, and dry-cured bacon are great choices.



EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES

Purchasing commercially prepared emergency food explicitly designed for disasters can be an effective way to ensure your family is nourished during an emergency. These products include freeze-dried meals, emergency food bars, and MREs (meals ready to eat), which are formulated for long shelf lives and minimal preparation.



FOOD STORAGE METHODS

Properly storing food prolongs its shelf life and maintains quality. Canning is ideal for fruits, vegetables, and meats. Dehydration is great for fruits and vegetables. Lastly, vacuum sealing preserves meats by decreasing air exposure and slowing decomposition.



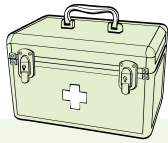
COOKING METHODS

Buy alternative cooking devices like a propane stove, camping stove, or rocket stove. Use these devices outdoors to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

**Remember that you will need a manual can opener and cooking and eating utensils—pots, pans, plates, you name it.*

CATEGORY 2: HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Gather essential medical supplies and sanitation items to address potential health issues.



First-Aid and Medical Supplies

A well-equipped first-aid kit can address minor injuries and stabilize more serious conditions until professional help is available.

FIRST-AID KIT ESSENTIALS RECOMMENDED BY THE RED CROSS:

- Emergency first aid instructions
- Two absorbent compress dressings
- 25 adhesive bandages (assorted sizes)
- One adhesive cloth tape
- Five antibiotic ointment packets
- Five antiseptic wipe packets
- Two packets of aspirin (81 milligrams each)
- One emergency blanket
- One breathing barrier (with one-way valve)
- One instant cold compress
- Two pairs of non-latex gloves
- Two hydrocortisone ointment packets (approximately one gram each)
- One 3-inch gauze roll (roller bandage)
- One roller bandage
- Five 3-by-3-inch sterile gauze pads
- Five 4-by-4-inch sterile gauze pads
- Oral thermometer (non-mercury/non-glass)
- Two triangular bandages
- Tweezers

You should prepare an extra supply of essential prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs such as pain relievers, antibiotics, antacids, and antidiarrheal drugs. Additionally, check the kit regularly, examine expiration dates, and replace any out-of-date contents.

Hygiene and Sanitation

Maintaining hygiene helps prevent the spread of disease and boosts morale.



Hygiene essentials include a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, feminine

hygiene products, soap, shampoo, and razors.



Sanitation supplies include toilet paper, hand sanitizer, wet

wipes, detergent, a portable toilet or waste bags, disinfectants and cleaning supplies, face masks, and gloves.

Pet Care

Have enough supplies for your pets during an emergency, including food, water, and medications.



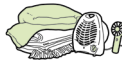
CATEGORY 3: SHELTER, WARMTH, AND TOOLS

You need a safe place in which you can shelter and stay warm. With the correct tools, you can handle repairs and care for necessities when services are disrupted.



Shelter Materials

Your home is your primary shelter, but you should be prepared to make repairs or a separate temporary shelter if needed. Tarps work well for making temporary shelters or covering damaged areas. Duct tape is useful for quick repairs. Of course, having a camping tent is best in case of evacuation.



Heating and Cooling

Prioritize heating over cooling. Our ancestors survived without AC, but not without heat.

Stock up on blankets, beanies, and wool socks for insulation. A kerosene space heater is a reliable, affordable, long-lasting option. For emergencies, have an emergency blanket (Mylar thermal blanket) on hand.

For cooling, use USB-powered fans, avoid exercise, wear wet clothes, and mist family members with water.



Tools and Equipment

Every household should have survival tools, such as an ax or hatchet; a shovel; a multi-tool or Swiss Army

knife; a crowbar and compass; work gloves; wrenches and pliers for utility shut-off; zip ties and paracord; screwdrivers and a hammer, nails, and screws; and plastic zip bags of various sizes.



Fire and Lighting

It's wise to have multiple kinds of tools and resources for starting fires and providing light. Must-haves include fire starters, lighters, waterproof matches, and fire strikers (flint and steel).

For lighting, you should have solar- and battery-powered lanterns, headlamps, flashlights, and candles. You need to have visibility and be able to start a fire reliably, no matter the situation.



Self-Defense and Security

Crime spikes during natural disasters.

You should be prepared to defend yourself. This depends on personal views and may include firearms and non-lethal weapons like pepper spray, tasers, knives, and survival bows. You also want to invest in prevention, such as body armor, bullet-proof backpacks, and a home security system.

CATEGORY 4: COMMUNICATION AND POWER

Staying informed and being able to communicate during emergencies is vital for safety and coordination. Alternative power sources ensure your devices remain operational.

Communication Devices

Have solar-powered or hand-cranked radios (particularly NOAA weather radios), satellite cell phones,

walkie-talkies, and extra batteries for all devices.

Familiarize yourself with satellite internet alternatives, such as Star-

link, which is weather-resilient and will allow you to have reliable high-speed internet.

Power Sources

If the grid goes down, backup power can be sourced from generators, solar-powered systems, or portable power banks.

Generators come in a range of options, from simple and affordable models that can power basic electronics to more expensive generators that connect to your home's gas or propane and can automatically start when the power goes out.

Solar-powered systems, while more costly, require low maintenance and operate silently.

Portable power banks are also helpful for charging smaller devices like cell phones. A hand-cranked power

bank can generate electricity manually, so you can charge devices even without sunlight. For larger electronics like a laptop, you may need a power inverter or a high-capacity power bank.

Transportation and Gas

Having a bike might prove helpful for fuel-independent transportation, but in most cases, you will likely be using a car.

To prepare, store 15 to 20 gallons of gas, enough for a full tank. Use proper containers and keep them in a cool, dry place away from heat, sparks, or flames. Never store gas inside your home. Instead, keep it in the garage and out of direct sunlight. Adding a fuel stabilizer will help extend its shelf life. An \$8 bottle of Sta-bil can treat and preserve 40 gallons of fuel for up to 24 months.

CATEGORY 5: FINANCE AND IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Can you barter and prove your identity?

Financial Preparedness

In emergencies, electronic payment systems may fail. You should have cash accessible.

Aim for at least three to six months' worth of expenses in emergency savings. Keep cash on hand and have \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 denominations. Store it in a fire- and waterproof safe or hidden location.

Prepare a beneficiary designation to ensure that your assets are passed on to your loved ones in the case of an unforeseen event.

Bartering Items

If financial institutions are compromised, cash may lose its value. Consider preparing with gold or silver coins, as they retain their worth.

Other valuable bartering items include jewelry, watches, ammunition, coffee and tea, and sweets like chocolate. Remember, in immediate disasters, essential goods are often more valuable than precious metals.

Important Documents

Make sure you have copies of personal identification such as photo IDs (driver's license, passport), birth certificates, and Social Security cards.

You should keep copies of your medical information, financial documents, and insurance policies, such as health insurance cards, a list of drugs and medical problems, prescription copies, bank account information, and insurance policies (home, auto, life).

Always have emergency contact cards with the phone numbers of family and friends and contact information for local emergency agencies. Keep physical copies in a waterproof, fireproof container, and digital copies stored on encrypted devices or in secure cloud storage.



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