

# Prepare at HOME



## Prepare for Disasters Before they Strike: Build A Disaster Supplies Kit

There are six basics you should stock for your home in the case of an emergency:

[water](#), [food](#), [first aid supplies](#), [clothing and bedding](#), [tools and emergency supplies](#), and [special items for medical conditions](#).

Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to carry container. Below is a comprehensive list of what should be included in your kit – recommended items are marked with an asterisk(\*).

Possible containers include a large, covered trash container, a camping backpack or a duffle bag. You should have both a stay at home and an away supply kit.

### Water

- Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more.
- Store one gallon of water per person per day.
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).\*

### Additional Information

- [Water sources during an emergency](#)

### Food

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices
- Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

### Additional Information

- [Food supplies during an emergency](#)

## **First Aid Kit**

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- (20) adhesive bandages, various sizes.
- (1) 5" x 9" sterile dressing.
- (1) conforming roller gauze bandage.
- (2) triangular bandages.
- (2) 3 x 3 sterile gauze pads.
- (2) 4 x 4 sterile gauze pads.
- (1) roll 3" cohesive bandage.
- (2) germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- (6) antiseptic wipes.
- (2) pair large medical grade non-latex gloves.
- Adhesive tape, 2" width.
- Anti-bacterial ointment.
- Cold pack.
- Scissors (small, personal).
- Tweezers.
- CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield.

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## **Non-Prescription Drugs**

- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

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## **Tools and Supplies**

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils\*
- Emergency preparedness manual\*

- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries\*
- Flashlight and extra batteries\*
- Cash or traveler's checks, change\*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife\*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

### **Sanitation**

- Toilet paper, towelettes\*
- Soap, liquid detergent\*
- Feminine supplies\*
- Personal hygiene items\*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

**Clothing and Bedding**

\*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots\*
- Rain gear\*
- Blankets or sleeping bags\*
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

**Special Items**

- Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons

**For Baby\***

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

**For Adults\***

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

**Entertainment (based on the ages of family members)**

- Games (cards) and books
- Portable music device

**Important Family Documents**

- Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:
  - Will, insurance policies, contracts deeds, stocks and bonds
  - Passports, social security cards, immunization records
  - Bank account numbers

- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)
- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the supplies kit in the trunk of your car.
- Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Replace your stored food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications

## Food and Water in an Emergency

If an earthquake, hurricane, winter storm or other disaster strikes your community, 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. This brochure was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in cooperation with the American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Having an ample supply of clean water is a top priority in an emergency. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments 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 one gallon 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 today, and try to find more for tomorrow. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

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## Water Sources

### How to Store Water

Store your water in thoroughly washed plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never use a container that has held toxic substances. Plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles, are best. You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums.

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

### Emergency Outdoor Water Sources

If you need to find water outside your home, you can use these sources. Be sure to treat 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 distill it first. You should not drink flood water.

### 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. As a last resort, you can use water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (not the bowl).

Do you know the location of your incoming water valve? You'll 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.

### **Three Ways to Treat 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 treat all water of uncertain purity before using it for drinking, food preparation or hygiene.

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

Two easy treatment 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 treating, 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 treating 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 household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular household liquid 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 gallon 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 treat water should be household 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.

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## **Food Supplies**

### **When Food Supplies Are Low**

If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for an extended 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 don't 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 on your cupboard shelves. In fact, familiar foods are important. They

can lift morale and give a feeling of security in time of stress. Also, canned foods won't require cooking, water or special preparation. Following are recommended short-term food storage plans.

### **Special Considerations**

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 liquid formula, 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 disposable utensils. And don't forget nonperishable foods for your pets.

### **Food 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 care-fully 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 at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.

### **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 quarts 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.

### **Shelf-life of Foods for Storage**

Here are some general guidelines for rotating common emergency foods.

#### **Use within six months:**

- Powdered milk (boxed)
- Dried fruit (in metal container)
- Dry, crisp crackers (in metal container)
- Potatoes

#### **Use within one year:**

- Canned condensed meat 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

**May be stored indefinitely** (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)

# *Evacuation Kit suggestions*

Emergencies can strike at any time. Be prepared with an Emergency Preparedness Kit, Adult 1- or 3-day. These backpack-style kits contain either one or three days of supplies for an adult, including water, food, radio, a flashlight, batteries and more.

## **Emergency Preparedness Kit (Adult, 3-day)**

An Emergency Preparedness, Adult 3-day, is a complete kit, sufficient for one person, to provide essential items an adult will need for at least three days after a disaster and is intended for storage at home, and to be used at home or in a place where someone may go if local authorities ask for an evacuation. The Red Cross online store offers both a regular and deluxe (higher quality content material) model of the Emergency Preparedness Kit, Adult 3-day. For more information, check out the Red Cross online store at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

## **Emergency Preparedness Kit (Adult, 1-day) for the Workplace**

An Emergency Preparedness Kit, Adult 1-day, is a complete kit, sufficient for one person, to provide essential items that an adult will need for at least one day after a disaster or emergency strikes in or near the workplace. Workplace kits may be tailored to the unique circumstances of the workplace. For example, if the workplace already provides and makes available OSHA-complaint first aid kits in facilities, then Workplace Emergency Preparedness Kits do not have to contain first aid supplies. If the workplace stores food and water in bulk quantities to be available in emergencies for building occupants, then the workplace kits do not need to have separate food and water in them. To order an Emergency Preparedness Kit (Adult 1-day) for the Workplace log on to the Red Cross online store at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

### **Intended Use of the Items in an Emergency Preparedness Kit**

#### **Flashlight**

Use the flashlight to find your way if the power is out. Do not use candles or any other open flame for emergency lighting.

#### **Battery-powered Radio**

News about the emergency may change rapidly as events unfold. You also will be concerned about family and friends in the area. Radio reports will give information about the areas most affected.

#### **Plastic Sheeting and Duct Tape (Adult, 3-day only)**

Use the plastic sheeting and duct tape for sheltering-in-place verses evacuation.

#### **Food**

Enough non-perishable food to sustain you for at least one day (three meals) if close to a workplace with stored food or three day supply if at home or other location, is suggested. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. The following items are suggested:

- Ready-to-eat canned meals, meats, fruits, and vegetables;
- Canned juices; and
- High-energy foods (granola bars, energy bars, etc.).

## **Water**

Keep at least one gallon of water available, or more if you are on medications that require water or that increase thirst. Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles.

## **Medications**

Include usual non-prescription medications that you take, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, etc. If you use prescription medications, keep at least three-day's supply of these medications at your workplace. Consult with your physician or pharmacist how these medications should be stored, and your employer about storage concerns.

## **First Aid Supplies**

If your employer does not provide first aid supplies, have the following essentials:

- Absorbent Compress 5x9 Dressing
- Adhesive Bandages (Assorted Sizes)
- Adhesive Cloth Tape 5 yds/1"
- Antibiotic Ointment Packets (approx 1g)
- Antiseptic Wipe Packets
- Packets of Aspirin (162mg)
- Pair of Non-Latex Gloves (Size Large)
- Scissors
- Roller Bandage 3"
- Sterile Gauze Pads 3x3
- First Aid Instruction Information

## **Additional Tools and Supplies to Include in Your Emergency Preparedness Kit (1-or 3-day)**

- Paper plates and cups, plastic utensils
- Non-electric can opener
- Personal hygiene items, including a toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, soap, contact lens supplies, and feminine supplies
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear, including a long sleeved shirt and long pants, as well as closed-toed shoes or boots
- If you wear glasses, keep an extra pair with your workplace disaster supplies.

## **General Information**

- Your kit should be adjusted based on your own personal needs.

- Do not include candles, weapons, toxic chemicals, or controlled drugs unless prescribed by a physician.
- Kits should be set up for both at-home and an evacuation kit to take with you when you depart. The following guidelines are set for both (in addition or inclusive of the above).

#### At Home Kits:

- Two flashlights
- Battery-operated radio
- Six extra sets of batteries.
- Gel freezer packs to keep food cold.
- A cooler.
- Matches and a lighter.
- A camping stove and/or grill with fuel, canned heat and/or charcoal bricks and starter fluid.
- Fire extinguisher (and a box of baking soda to extinguish a fire).
- If anyone in your family is taking prescription medicines, keep a two-week supply on hand.
- If you have an infant, prepare a two-week supply of diapers, baby formula, bottles, pacifiers, etc.
- A medicine kit with a first aid book, a two-week supply of over-the-counter medicines: aspirins, stomach antacids, antidiarrhea medicine, iodine, hydrogen peroxide, antibacterial ointment, bandages, insect repellent, scissors, tape, etc. *Check your first aid book for a list of important items.*
- Several tarps (to be used to cover holes in roof after storm passes).
- Towels (three per person).
- Camera and film (video camera and blank tape). Captures condition and damages for insurance purposes.
- Kitchen utensils, spoons, knives, forks, hand-operated can opener, bottle opener, cooking pans, spatula, etc.
- A whistle.
- A cell phone (if possible) with extra batteries and a car charger.
- Drinking water in plastic containers (minimum one gallon of water per person per day for 14 days).
- A water purifying kit.
- Non-perishable food in cans or sealed containers (enough for 14 days). Don't forget the pets. *See section on pets.*
- A box of large, plastic trash bags.
- A box of locking top, sealing plastic bags – one and two gallon size.

#### Evacuation Kits:

- Map and compass.
- A can of tire sealer in your trunk.
- Sleeping bags and/or blankets for each member of the family.
- Air or foam mattresses.

- Identification for everyone.
- Important documents.
- Extra clothing, shoes, etc.
- Books, games, playing cards, etc. (this may be an extended stay).
- Soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, toilet paper, feminine products, paper towels, etc.
- Cash - Enough for at least one week.