

EMERGENCY

Food Storage and Preparedness

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 families 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.

How to Cook If the Power Goes Out

For emergency cooking you can use a fireplace, or a charcoal grill or camp stove can be used outdoors. You can also heat food with candle warmers, chafing dishes and fondue pots. 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.

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 on your shelves.

Storage Tips

1. Keep food in a dry, cool spot - a dark area if possible.
2. Keep food covered at all times.
3. Open food boxes or cans care-fully so that you can close them tightly after each use.
4. Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in tight containers.
5. Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight cans to protect them from pests.
6. Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.

7. 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

1. During and right after a disaster, it will be vital that you maintain your strength. So remember:
2. Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
3. Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (two quarts a day).
4. Take in enough calories to enable you to do any necessary work.
5. Include vitamin, mineral and protein supplements in your stockpile to assure adequate nutrition.

How long can food supplies be stored?

To judge how long you can store food supplies, look for an **“expiration date”** or **“best if used by”** date on the product. If you can not find a date on the product, then the general recommendation is to store food products for six months and then replace them.

Some households find it helpful to pull food products for their regular meals from their disaster supplies kit and replace them immediately on an ongoing basis, so the food supplies are always fresh.

What kinds of food supplies are recommended to store in case of a disaster?

Try to avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't stock salty foods, since they will make you thirsty. Familiar foods can lift morale and give a feeling of security in time of stress. Also, canned foods won't

require cooking, water or special preparation. Take into account your families unique needs and tastes. Try to include foods that they will enjoy and that are also high in calories and nutrition.

Store supplies of non-perishable foods and water in a handy place. You need to have these items packed and ready in case there is no time to gather food from the kitchen when disaster strikes. Sufficient supplies to last several days to a week are recommended.

Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. Foods that are compact and lightweight are easy to store and carry.

Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned food with high liquid content.

Recommended foods include:

1. Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables. (Be sure to include a manual can opener)
2. Canned juices, milk and soup (if powdered, store extra water).
3. High energy foods, such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail mix.
4. Comfort foods, such as hard candy, sweetened cereals, candy bars and cookies.
5. Instant coffee, tea bags.
6. Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets, if necessary.
7. Compressed food bars. They store well, are lightweight, taste good and are nutritious.
8. Trail mix. It is available as a prepackaged product or you can assemble it on your own.

9. Dried foods. They can be nutritious and satisfying, but have some have a lot of salt content, which promotes thirst. Read the label.
10. Freeze-dried foods. They are tasty and lightweight, but will need water for reconstitution.
11. Instant Meals. Cups of noodles or cups of soup are a good addition, although they need water for reconstitution.
12. Snack-sized canned goods. Good because they generally have pull-top lids or twist-open keys.
13. Prepackaged beverages. Those in foil packets and foil-lined boxes are suitable because they are tightly sealed and will keep for a long time.

Food Options to Avoid:

1. Commercially dehydrated foods. They can require a great deal of water for reconstitution and extra effort in preparation.
2. Bottled foods. They are generally too heavy and bulky, and break easily.
3. Meal-sized canned foods. They are usually bulky and heavy.
4. Whole grains, beans, pasta. Preparation could be complicated under the circumstances of a disaster.

Shelf-life of Foods for Storage

Here are some general guidelines for rotating common emergency foods.

Use within six months:

1. Powdered milk (boxed)
2. Dried fruit (in metal container)
3. Dry, crisp crackers (in metal container)
4. Potatoes

Use within one year:

1. Canned condensed meat and vegetable soups
2. Canned fruits, fruit juices and vegetables
3. Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals (in metal containers)
4. Peanut butter
5. Jelly
6. Hard candy and canned nuts
7. Vitamin C

May be stored indefinitely (in proper containers and conditions):

1. Wheat
2. Vegetable oils
3. Dried corn
4. Baking powder
5. Soybeans
6. Instant coffee, tea and cocoa
7. Salt
8. Noncarbonated soft drinks
9. White rice
10. Bouillon products
11. Dry pasta
12. Powdered milk (in nitrogen-packed cans)