

FOOD AND WATER FOR EMERGENCIES

When disasters occur, it can take days, weeks, or even months before life returns to normal. Most emergency officials recommend that citizens store at least a 3-day supply of food and water in preparation for a disaster. However, as we've seen from Hurricane Katrina and other major events, we may be forced to survive without the help of the local authorities for a much longer period of time. *In light of the severe cleansings occurring throughout the world, Oshienushisama recommends that we store enough food, water and other supplies to last at least 2 weeks, if not longer.*

Water Storage Tips

As you prepare your family's water supply, keep the following rule of thumb in mind:

Store a minimum of one gallon, per person, per day, to cover drinking, washing, bathing, and all other uses.

You should adjust the amount of your supply, as necessary, if certain members of your family need more water than the average person. For example, if you have an infant, a relative who is ill, or pets, you may need to store more water.

Store your water in a cool location and make sure that the containers are not exposed to sunlight. Check and rotate your supply on a regular basis (at least once every 6 months) and dispose of any water that may be outdated or contaminated.

Building Your Emergency Water Supply

1. One of the quickest and easiest ways to build your supply is to purchase bottled water. Many grocery stores often have cases of bottled water on sale for as little as \$6 or \$7. *However, keep in mind that most bottled water must usually be replaced after 12 months.* If you decide to store commercially bottled water, look for ways to incorporate the consumption of it into your daily routine so that it is not ultimately wasted. As we prepare for emergencies, let's do our best to remember # 9 of the Ten Points: "Avoid waste, and use materials efficiently."
2. Another option is to store filtered tap water in "food-grade" plastic containers, which can be purchased at camping stores and various emergency supply websites. While containers of various sizes are available, keep in mind that five-gallon containers, when full, may be too heavy for some people to lift.

Before filling the containers, wash them thoroughly with warm water and soap, taking care not to touch the inside of the lid with your finger or to place the lid on an unclean surface. Mark the date that you filled the container and store it in a cool location away from sunlight. If you live in an earthquake zone, store your water in several locations to minimize the chances of losing your entire supply if an earthquake occurs.

Establish a rotational system in which you use your emergency water as part of your daily routine. When you need water for drinking, cooking, or cleaning, start by using the container in your supply marked with the oldest refill date. Once that container is empty, fill it with filtered tap water, note the date of refill, and store it with the rest of your water supply. Pull out the next oldest container of water and repeat the process. This routine will ensure that you have a steady supply of fresh water for your family.

As you build your supply, please keep in mind that:

- It's always a good idea to spiritually purify the water you drink by giving it Light.
- Untreated tap water must be replaced every 6 months.
- Bottles that were originally used to store fruit juice or milk are not sufficient for emergency water storage. Milk protein and fruit sugars cannot be adequately removed and will create an environment for bacterial growth.
- You can use rain barrels to store water outside for various purposes such as household cleaning or flushing your toilet. This is sometimes called "gray water." Some members use buckets or empty kitty litter containers to capture water that would otherwise be wasted as they're waiting for their bath water to reach the appropriate temperature. You can also capture water for other purposes this way in the kitchen sink while waiting for the running water to get hot enough to wash dishes, and by letting the running water fill up dishes and pots to soak while starting on washing the glassware and silverware.

What You Can Do If a Major Storm Is Approaching Your Community

If you have time to prepare for an emergency, such as an incoming hurricane, fill any available pitchers, pots, pans, and tea kettles with water. It's also a particularly good idea to fill your bathtub, while keeping in mind that the water stored in the tub should not be used for drinking, unless you have a waterBOB (www.waterbob.com) or you can decontaminate the water through boiling or another reliable method.

Monitor the news and be prepared to turn off your water valve if the authorities indicate that the water lines have been contaminated. The authorities may also instruct citizens to boil water that is unsafe to drink without boiling.

Decontaminating Water

If you need to decontaminate water during an emergency, the most effective way to kill harmful bacteria is usually through *boiling*. While the local authorities may issue special instructions, the water should generally be handled as follows:

1. If there is any sediment in the water, filter the water through a clean cloth or fine mesh strainer.

2. Bring the water to a rolling boil for at least one minute. If you live greater than a mile above sea level, increase the boil time to at least 3 minutes.
3. Cover the water while it cools and then store it in a tightly covered, clean container.
4. If the water tastes flat, aerate it by pouring it a few times from one container to another.

Similar results can be achieved through solar pasteurization. For more details on this process, see <http://www.solarcooking.org/plans/spasteur.htm> .

In addition, the US Environmental Protection Agency has useful guidance on treating water during emergencies. See <http://water.epa.gov/drink/emereprep/emergencydisinfection.cfm> for more info.

Water on the Go

In his June 2008 teaching, Oshienushisama urged members to carry food and water with them in the event of an emergency. Nalgene (<http://www.nalgene-outdoor.com>) and other companies make inexpensive containers that you can use to carry water with you. Another excellent option is to purchase Coast-Guard-approved emergency drinking water, which has a shelf-life of 5 years. This product, which is typically packaged in portable boxes or pouches, can be purchased from many websites that sell emergency supplies.

Even if it's not possible to carry water with you at all times, please at least store some water rations in your emergency backpack. You should have a three-day supply of water (16 oz. per day; more in hotter climates), in case you're forced to evacuate with little notice.

Other water-purification supplies to consider having in your backpack include iodine tablets, portable camping filters (look for products that filter out both bacteria *and* viruses), or a SteriPen (a somewhat expensive device that uses UV light to purify water). All of these items can also be purchased from many websites that sell emergency supplies.

Food Storage Tips

Store what your family normally eats. You and your loved ones will likely be under stress when disaster strikes. It may be particularly difficult for your family members (especially children) to adjust if they're suddenly forced to eat strange or unfamiliar foods. Having comfort foods available will contribute to your family's psychological well-being during disasters.

Store food that doesn't require refrigeration or need to be cooked. Meat, vegetables, fruit, soup, stew, broth, milk, juice and cereal all can be found canned, dried, dehydrated, or packaged for long shelf-life. In addition, crackers, nuts, nut butter, jam, raisins, and seeds will last for an extended period of time, even after opening.

It is important to set up a rotation system to ensure that your food is suitable for consumption when you need it most. Even food packaged for long-term storage will eventually spoil or lose its nutritive value if you simply stuff it in the back of your pantry and forget about it. Make it your priority to regularly consume some of the oldest food in your supply, and replace it when you go to the grocery store or purchase new supplies online.

One of the simplest ways to rotate your emergency food is to use the pantry method. For example, store the oldest food on the top shelf of your pantry, and keep the newest food on the bottom. As you use the food from the top shelf, move the food up and replenish your supply of new food on the bottom shelf. Write the expiration date on the food to alleviate any confusion in the process.

Be sure to check your supply on a regular basis and discard any cans that are leaking, swollen, or corroded. Buy food in bulk and remember to rotate, rotate, rotate! A well-planned rotation system will help you to avoid waste and ensure that edible food is available at your time of need.

What Do I Do If There's No Electricity?

When the utilities are not working, keep the refrigerator door closed as much as possible to slow the rise of the temperature inside. Use the food in the refrigerator first, then the food in the freezer. Work through any food that is more easily spoiled, such as leftovers, fish, meat, and milk, then eat any vegetables and fruit. Eat the food in the pantry once the perishables are gone.

Even if no electricity is available, you may still be able to cook food if you have a barbeque grill, hibachi, or camping stove. Don't forget to store extra fuel and matches in a safe and dry location.

Another excellent option is solar cooking; this method has the advantage that it can be used even by apartment dwellers. A basic solar cooker has reflectors and a container that concentrates heat from the sun to cook your food. You can purchase inexpensive solar cookers online or even make your own. For more details on this process, see <http://www.solarcooking.org/plans/>.

Food for Evacuations

It is important to keep at least a 3-day supply of food in your emergency backpack, in case you need to evacuate. "Meals Ready to Eat" (MREs) and emergency food ration bars are well suited for this purpose. Both have over a 5-year shelf-life and are packaged to withstand tough conditions. Some MREs can last up to 10 years if they're stored in a cool location.

MREs were designed for soldiers living in the field. They are compact, easy to carry, and balanced in nutrition for high-stress situations. Emergency food ration bars are routinely used by emergency relief organizations, such as the American Red Cross and the US Coast Guard. They're non-thirst-provoking and typically available in 1200-, 2400-, and 3600-calorie blocks.

There are also dehydrated and freeze-dried foods available in cans or pouches. These are favorites for campers and hikers because they are lightweight and easy to carry. Keep in mind, however, that these products typically require water to prepare.

All of these products can be found on many emergency supply web sites, including Camping Survival (www.campingsurvival.com), Emergency Essentials (<http://beprepared.com>), Mayday Industries (www.maydayindustries.com), Nitro-Pak (www.nitro-pak.com), and Quake Kare (www.quakekare.com). Organic dehydrated foods are available on sites such as www.maryjanesfarm.org/categories/food-pantry.asp.

Tips for Managing Hunger and Stress

The production of glucose increases when we are under stress. This increase in glucose leads the body to produce more insulin than it would under normal circumstances. As stressors lessen and/or the body adapts, insulin production declines, producing a dip that causes hunger. This is one reason why people consume large quantities of food quickly during an emergency. Although high-protein foods, including meat, fish, and eggs can curb your appetite for longer periods of time, eating too much protein can increase your thirst and result in higher water consumption. With this in mind, it is fine to include dehydrated meats (jerky) and canned meats and fish along with powdered milk and eggs in your supply of emergency food.

Foods high in fiber fill you up and can help stabilize glucose levels. These include oatmeal, lentils, buckwheat, almond butter, and quinoa. Cinnamon, tarragon, and Parmesan cheese add to the enjoyment of food and help you to feel satisfied with less. Fatty foods are also satisfying and can be useful for other reasons; one spoonful of coconut butter, for example, will warm the body in cold weather. Candy can quickly reverse a hypoglycemic episode if someone is known to have hypoglycemic episodes or is a diabetic. After the episode subsides, glucose-stabilizing foods such as those listed above can be offered.

Yoko Agriculture and the Importance of Self-Sufficiency

To be truly prepared, it is important to not be overly dependent on the conveniences of modern society. Sukuinushisama, Seishusama, and Oshienushisama have all stressed the importance of cultivating Yoko gardens for our families. What better investment can be made in our future than to create gardens full of God's Light and spiritual essence?

At the very least, it is a good idea to keep seeds handy in the event of a prolonged emergency. Beans, grains, and other seeds can be sprouted relatively quickly when food is scarce. These young plants are full of vitamins and minerals, and are delicious either cooked or raw.

Food that cannot be eaten immediately should be preserved for later use. In most North American farming communities, people are accustomed to canning their food. In other regions of the world, such as Asia, people bury cleaned chicken, fish, or unshelled eggs in buckets of rock salt to preserve them.

Days or weeks later, the salted fish and meat are hung out to dry in the sun. There are multiple ways to preserve food and avoid wasting God's blessings. For more information on this important practice, visit the website of the National Center for Home Food Preservation (<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>).

In addition to gardening, take some time to familiarize yourself with the edible plants that grow wild in your area. The respected edible plants expert Linda Runyon once wrote: "Weeds are in every country of the world, so it's beyond me why there is world hunger. An entire civilization is walking on their food." There are several excellent edible plant resources available, including Tom Brown's Guide to Wild Edible and Medicinal Plants (<http://www.amazon.com/Browns-Guide-Edible-Medicinal-Plants/dp/0425100634>), Petersen's Field Guide to Edible Plants (<http://www.amazon.com/Field-Guide-Edible-Wild-Plants/dp/039592622X>), and The Essential Wild Food Survival Guide (http://www.ofthefield.com/html/learning_resources_3.html).

Other Supplies to Store

In addition to food and water, store critical items for your family, such as flashlights, a first aid kit, extra toilet paper, infant supplies, hearing aid batteries, pet food, etc. If you have any family members who need special care (e.g., infants, the elderly, or those who may be cleansing), take the time to plan for how you would care for them if your community were struck by disaster. See www.ready.gov, www.fema.gov/areyouready, and www.getprepared.gc.ca for helpful tips.