



General Preparedness

***“A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself,
But the simple pass on and are punished” (Proverbs 22:3 NKJV)***

There are **many** levels of preparedness and each one has its own merits. Preparedness should be tailored to your family, your lifestyle, and more importantly *what* you are preparing for.

At the very minimum, it is prudent to have a few weeks of food and supplies put aside. As we have seen over the past two years, global pandemics, global panic, civil unrest, rising prices of commodities, ships stuck at sea, wars, etc. can all have an impact on what we are able to obtain from physical stores as well as online retailers. A little bit of planning and a minimal amount of money can provide some extra peace of mind for you and your family.

Preparing your supplies does not have to be expensive! If you happen to have the ability to buy everything at once, then there is little reason to buy incrementally, especially in this weird world. However, most families are on a budget, and the current economy has strained many of those budgets.

Food storage can be comprised of staples from the store (rice, beans, canned vegetables, canned meat, etc.), freeze-dried or dehydrated foods (Mountain House, Thrive, MRE’s, etc), or home-canned goods. Each has its benefits and a good mix of all of them is the best solution if you are serious about long-term food storage.

In addition to the obvious food supplies, do not forget things like over-the-counter medications, extra prescriptions, paper goods (toilet paper, paper towels, paper plates), extra batteries, flashlights, portable radios, first aid supplies, etc. We will cover each of these later in this guide.

This guide will help you get prepared by purchasing incrementally as you do your normal shopping trips. Super1 and Winco are great places to find both good deals on canned goods as well as a variety of well-priced bulk items. Costco is great for OTC medications and items like canned meat, batteries, etc. Other retailers will also be mentioned in this guide as good places to obtain an item at a good price. This is not an exhaustive list, nor does it constitute an endorsement of that particular retailer.

Mental Preparedness

Having a supply of food and water is a good thing. However, all the “things” in the world won’t help unless you have a level of mental preparedness. Mental preparedness doesn’t mean preparing for doomsday, but it does mean thinking through the most likely scenario you could experience. Performing an honest appraisal of likely scenarios, and thinking about how you and your family would deal with them, will do you more good than having cases of MREs in your closet. Having the required items on-hand for an emergency is a natural by-product of thinking through the likely possibilities.

Working through scenarios such as prolonged economic hardship, lack of power/inability to leave your house due to severe weather, shortage of goods due to supply chain issues, loss of employment, etc. will help you identify strengths and weaknesses in your current situation. Preparing is basic risk management.

Identify the MOST LIKELY scenario, and plan for it first. After you have done that, plan for less likely scenarios. If you have the money and are able to prepare for multiple scenarios, that will put you and your family in an even better position.

Basic Food Storage for a Year

Here are generally accepted quantities for *each person for one year*. This may vary depending on how much food you normally consume. A 16-year-old football player and a 5-year-old consume vastly different amounts of food! Also, food allergies and dietary restrictions will require you to adjust as needed. If you are wanting to prepare for 30 days, divide these numbers by 12, 90 days divided by 4, etc.

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|---------------|--------|---|
| Grains | 300lbs | Rice, pasta, cereals, flour, baking mixes, popcorn,etc. |
| Legumes | 75lbs | Beans (kidney,navy,pinto,etc), lentils, peas, soybean |
| Powdered Milk | 18lbs | Provides good source of shelf-stable protein |
| Cooking Oil | 2gal | |
| Sugar/Honey | 60lbs | |
| Salt | 6lbs | Normal consumption, baking, preserving, etc. |
| Water | 45gal | This amount is bare minimum |

Building your Storage Incrementally – The 12-Week Plan

Many people will need to build their storage incrementally. While it seems overwhelming, a plan like the one below can help you build your stores while not spending a lot of cash. Most weeks in the plan require approximately \$10 to make your purchases.

Taking advantage of grocery store sales where you can buy a flat of canned goods, cheap (usually \$9 or less), pasta on sale, sugar and flour (especially holiday sales) makes this process even easier.

Once complete, you can cycle back through this list, or begin purchasing items from the intermediate list in the next section.

(DS) below indicates items available for \$1.25 at the Dollar Store.

| | |
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| Week 1: | Week 7: |
| 3 cans of vegetables, beans, soup or fruit | 3 cans of fruit |
| 3 lbs of pasta | 2 boxes of oatmeal |
| 1 box of salt | 2 cans of chicken or beef broth |
| 1 Box of 300 matches (DS) | Week 8: |
| Week 2: | 10 lbs of white rice |
| 1 flat of bottled water (24-30 bottles) | 2 lbs of brown sugar |

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| 10lbs of white rice | 2 rolls of paper towels |
| 2 jar candles (DS) | Week 9: |
| Week 3: | 1 pack of spare batteries for your radio or flashlight |
| 1 5lb bag of flour | 5 cans of tuna or other canned meat |
| 1 5lb bag of sugar | 3 boxes of mac and cheese/Pasta Roni, etc. |
| 2 cans of chicken or beef broth | 1 pack of toilet paper |
| Week 4: | Week 10: |
| 1 jar of peanut butter | 5 cans of condensed soup |
| 5 cans of tuna or other canned meat | 3 lbs of pasta |
| 2 boxes of mac and cheese, Pasta Roni, etc. | 2 cans of stew |
| Week 5: | Week 11: |
| 3 cans of chili | 51oz Gatorade Powder (rehydration, flavoring chlorinated water) |
| 2 jars of pasta sauce | 2 jars of pasta sauce |
| 1 48oz jug of cooking oil/olive oil | Week 12: |
| Week 6: | 2 cans of chili |
| 3 cans of vegetables (corn, green beans, etc) | 4lb pinto beans/dried beans |
| 5 cans of beans (pinto, kidney, etc) | 1 flat of bottled water (24-30 bottles) |
| 3 seasoning packets (taco seasoning, etc) | (2) Tang 20 oz. |

** purchase a good, manual can opener to use when there is no power

Once you have a comfortable amount of food stored (this varies from family to family), divert some of your preparedness money towards some of the items below:

OTC medications - (Costco is great for big families, Dollar Store is great for smaller quantities of common things such as aspirin, allergy meds, Ibuprofen, etc.). Purchase based on what your family will use and how much they will use. If there are only two people, a 500-tablet bottle of medicine might be excessive. Remember, if possible, plan for times when you may not be able to get to a doctor for common issues. Things such as NyQuil, Pepto-Bismol, cold medicine (daytime and nighttime) expectorants, and sleep aids could prove to be invaluable in certain situations.

Feminine Products – Even if there is no one currently using these in your household, it would be good to have a small amount on hand in case female visitors get stranded during an emergency. Additionally, tampons can be utilized as a first-aid tool to help stop bleeding wounds.

First Aid Supplies - The Dollar Store is a great source for alcohol (70% minimum), hydrogen peroxide, cotton balls, etc. but you get what you pay for with bandaids. Make sure that you have a good supply of bandaids, gauze, antibiotic ointment, cloth tape, etc. to treat basic

injuries. Even a minor laceration could prove extremely dangerous or fatal if it becomes infected and you are unable to reach medical care.

Plastic Trash Bags – great for trash, storing food (unscented bags), disposing of human waste, patching leaks, disposable ponchos, quick shelter, etc. A box of 200 may go quickly in a prolonged emergency, so stock up.

Toilet Paper/Paper Towels - Keep enough on hand for 3-6 months. Paper towels will go quickly in a prolonged emergency where electricity may be down and laundering towels isn't practical.

Paper Plates/Plastic Cutlery – Easy to use when electricity or water is out and the dirty plates can be used as kindling to start fires.

Batteries – Keep on hand the most commonly used in your household. AAA , AA, C, D, etc. Costco is a great place to get these. Make sure to keep them in a dry place.

Lighters/Box of Matches/Candles - Dollar Store is a great place to get boxes of matches and wand lighters as well as jar candles/hurricane candles. Stock up on enough for a few weeks should the power go out.

Flashlights/Lanterns - A good flashlight is worth the investment. If you don't have \$40 or more to spend on a flashlight, Harbor Freight has some really good deals on decent flashlights. Battery-powered lanterns can be found at Harbor Freight, sporting goods stores and frequently, at thrift stores for a fraction of the price!

Basic Tools – You should have a hammer, a crescent wrench, a screwdriver with at least a Phillips and a flat head bit and a pair of pliers. Harbor Freight is a great place to get these without breaking the bank.

Other tools - A crowbar, bolt cutters, cylinder jack, pick axe and shovel are all good items to have on hand, especially if you need to do any kind of rescue, moving fallen/displaced objects, etc. when emergency services may not be immediately available.

Tarps - A couple of basic tarps (Harbor Freight is a good source for basic tarps) will provide a multi-use tool. These can be used to cover items from the elements, create makeshift shelters, collect rainwater, create privacy barriers, etc.

Intermediate Preparedness – Beyond the Basics

Once you have a comfortable amount of the basic provisions for your family, and you have covered things like batteries, first aid supplies and basic tools, you might want to focus on building your longer-

term preparedness items. Again, these should be based on your circumstances, your family size and situation and what situations you are preparing for.

For items that are important to you, make sure that you have a backup. There is an adage, “Two is one, one is none”. This means when you have only one, Murphy’s Law will kick in and it will break exactly when you need it. Apply this to medicine, flashlights and any other item that you can’t do without.

Additional Food Storage items:

Water – Water is one of the most vital things to have, right behind shelter/warmth. You can last weeks without food, but only days without water. To beef up your water storage, you should diversify. Add additional water to your preps in the form of rigid 5 gallon water bottles. Have water purification available to treat water you collect (bleach, purification tablets, water filter, filter straws, etc.)

Beans – One of the main staples. It’s hard to have too many. Keep them cool, dry, and in a sealed container.

Rice - Ultra versatile, nutritional (more than 12 essential vitamins and minerals) and filling. It’s also hard to have too much rice on hand. Stored properly, cool, dry and sealed from pests, it will last many years.

Dried Pasta – Also very versatile, easy to cook, and long-lasting if stored properly. Thin pasta like spaghetti and vermicelli take up little space and stack neatly, making it easy to add to your stash.

Popcorn (kernels, not ready-pop) – filling and easy to cook, it’s a good item to have around.

Pickles/Pickled vegetables – Great health benefits, especially if your sustenance ends up being mostly pasta, rice and potatoes.

Fermented foods/Sauerkraut, etc. -- Great health benefits, especially if your sustenance ends up being mostly pasta, rice and potatoes.

Tomato Sauce/Stewed Tomatoes – Having plenty of these on hand is helpful to maintain a variety when cooking from your food stores. You can easily create sauces, stews, pasta sauce, etc.

Spices – Having a range of spices on hand will keep things from getting boring if you are cooking a lot of rice, pasta or potatoes every day. Buy spices that you will use. The Chef’s Store and WinCo are great sources for bulk spices.

Bouillon – keeping bouillon cubes or beef/chicken base in your preps is another way to keep things from getting boring. A tablespoon or cube in a pot of rice will give it some needed flavor.

Baking Supplies – flour, baking soda, salt, sugar, yeast. All of these can help add some normalcy to bad situations. Flour should be stored cool, dry and tightly sealed (+/- 18 mo shelf life). Baking soda should be kept dry and will last years. Salt should also be kept dry and really never expires. If it clumps, break it up. Unless it becomes moldy or infested with critters, it should be good. Sugar – same as salt. Yeast has a shorter shelf life and is temperature sensitive, so to get the longest use from it, store it in the freezer if possible.

Peanut Butter – a good source of protein and energy and fairly shelf-stable at an average of 2-3 years, if kept cool.

Nuts and Granola – great source of energy and adds some variety to your diet. The downside is that due to the fats in the nuts, shelf life isn't as long as most of the foods on our list, usually less than a year.

Canned Soup, Chili, Stews – You can never have too much of these in your preps. The beauty of these is that aside from being a meal in a can, they've already been cooked, so if you are unable to reheat the content, you can eat it directly.

Honey/Sugar – even if you don't normally partake of sugar, it is a necessity in emergency situations. It is calorie-dense, so it helps provide energy. Sugar can be used with salt to create a hydration drink. They are both also natural preservatives and can be used to help preserve some food. Both can be used as first aid applications in lacerations and abrasions, as they both help draw water from the wound – and thus water from any bacteria – helping minimize infection. Honey's PH level helps wound healing and can have an antibacterial effect on certain kinds of bacteria.

Coffee/Tea – Even if you are not a coffee or tea drinker, having these items in your stash can be good items to trade with people. Teas can be therapeutic in stressful times and can be used, along with other ingredients, to help soothe coughs, loosen congestion, etc.

Multivitamins – If you ever get to the place where you are living off your food storage, there is a good possibility that you will not be eating a diet with proper nutrition. A multivitamin will be essential to maintaining good health in a stressful time with a less than ideal diet.

Vinegar - Any vinegar with a 5% or more acidity rating is a good item to keep on hand. You can use it for cooking, canning, pickling, etc. You can also use it to clean and disinfect surfaces and laundry. It has medicinal uses as an anti-bacterial in wounds, soothing insect bites and scratches and sunburns.

Bleach - Everyone is aware of the sanitizing properties of bleach. It is prudent to have a gallon or two of unscented bleach in your stores. This can be used to sanitize plates, utensils, etc. It can be used to sanitize surfaces (especially important if you are all stuck at home and the stomach bug shows up). Bleach can be used to render water safe for drinking (8 drops per gallon). Bleach has a fairly short shelf

life. If you keep it in a cool, dark place, it should last for 12-18 months. *Educate yourself now on bleach to water ratios required for different sanitation processes so that you don't have to worry about it when the time comes. Write the ratios on the bleach bottle with a Sharpie so you can refer to them.*

Additional non-food items:

Communications – Having a method of communication that is not reliant on cellular phones is important. There are many options, including HAM radios (licensing required), CB radios, FRS Radios (the kind you get at Walmart). All of these will provide short-distance communications (a few blocks to a few miles, with some exceptions). Investing in some radios so that you can communicate with neighbors or with family members who are close to home in an emergency is a good idea. At the very least, invest in a good, battery-powered radio that receives AM/FM and NOAA/Weather Alerts, so that you are not in the dark if TV/Satellite/Internet go out. Buying a radio that is both battery-powered and has a hand crank will give you even more flexibility.

Physical Protection – not everyone is comfortable or able to own and use a firearm. If you are willing and able but do not currently have one, it might be a good time to obtain one. There are a variety of different firearms and as many opinions on what is good/bad. A suggestion for new owners who have limited exposure is to purchase a revolver in .38/.357 caliber. A revolver is simple and easy to use, with fewer moving parts than a pistol, yet effective. The .38/.357 caliber is a good self-defense caliber without packing too much power for a new firearm user. If you are not comfortable with owning a firearm, there are other resources such as pepper spray, stun guns, etc. The sad reality is that if the situation gets worse, there are going to be people setting out to take advantage of others. Having some way to protect yourself is prudent.

Entertainment – Having some forms of entertainment for times when you are stuck at home or in a long-term situation without normal services is good for your mental health. Some ideas are a deck of cards, board games, crossword puzzles, coloring books/crayons for kids, and books (thrift stores have TONS of used books). On your tablet (iPad, etc.) or smartphone, downloading music, movies, episodes of TV series, etc. will help break up the time and could be a great diversion for cooped-up kids and adults alike!

Portable Battery Banks - These portable chargers, most about the size of your phone, have become more popular and affordable in recent years. Some have solar charging options. While these devices won't usually charge a laptop or larger device, they will usually charge a cell phone or iPad 2-4 times. Having these will enable you to keep sending texts, receiving calls, listening to music, etc. long after the power has gone out.