



Disaster **readiness - response - recovery**

For immediate release

Stock your disaster supply kit with water, food and more

A disaster can happen anytime or anywhere. You and your family will be better able to cope with an emergency until help arrives if you prepare now by putting together a disaster supply kit, according to North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

A disaster supply kit should contain the basics: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, emergency supplies and tools, and special items.

Water

Water is the most important item. Store water in plastic containers, such as clean soft-drink bottles. Avoid using containers that could decompose, break or contaminate the water. To keep stored water fresh, change it every six months.

A normally active person needs to drink at least 2 quarts of water each day. If it's hot and you are very active, you need twice as much. Children, nursing mothers and sick people will need more. Follow these guidelines for water storage:

- Store at least 1 gallon of water per person per day (2 quarts for drinking and 2 quarts for food preparation, washing dishes, and bathing). Two gallons per person is better.
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household, more if you have a place to store it.
- Include bleach for purifying additional water if supplies run out (coffee filters may be used to remove sediment before purifying water).
- Include a medicine dropper or 1/8 teaspoon and 1/4 teaspoon measuring spoons for measuring bleach.

Food

Prepare a two-week supply of nonperishable food. The gas or electricity could be off during an emergency, so select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. Rotate the food with newly purchased food supplies to ensure freshness. Buy food in packages that contain an amount that can be consumed in one meal.

Make sure you purchase foods that you and your family like as well as foods that have a long shelf-life. Because they contain liquids, canned fruit, vegetables, and fruit juices are excellent choices.

Consider stocking up on these items:

- ready-to-eat canned fruits and vegetables
- canned juices, milk, soup (if powdered or concentrated, store extra water), cheese spreads
- staples, (sugar, salt and pepper)
- high-energy foods (peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix, dried fruit and nuts)

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- vitamins
- foods for infants, elderly people and those on special diets
- comfort foods, such as cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee and tea
- canned meats, such as tuna and Vienna sausage

Don't forget items you'll need to prepare food, including charcoal, wood for the fireplace, fuel cups (Sterno), or gas for a gas grill.

Clothing and bedding

Remember that your air conditioner or furnace may not be functioning. Be sure you have access to clothing that is appropriate for very high or very low temperatures.

First aid kit

Store your first aid kit in a convenient place, and make sure everyone knows where it is. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about storing prescription medicines. Keep a first aid kit at home and another in each car. Store items in airtight plastic bags. A first aid kit should include:

- sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- tongue depressors, which may be used to make small splints
- gauze pads (2-inch and 4-inch)
- roller bandages (3-5 rolls)
- tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- assorted sizes of safety pins
- scissors
- cleaning agent or soap
- tweezers
- latex gloves
- needle
- sunscreen
- moist towelettes
- antiseptic (alcohol and antibiotic ointment)
- thermometer

The disaster supply kit should also contain non-prescription drugs such as aspirin or another pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid and syrup of Ipecac, which may be used to induce vomiting if you are so advised by a poison control center.

Tools and other supplies

The kit should contain tools such as pliers, tape, a utility knife and wrench (to turn off household gas or water) along with the following items.

- cash or traveler's checks (or both)
- battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- tape
- cellular phone (fully charged)
- matches in a waterproof container

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- compass
- cameras, film and batteries to document damage
- aluminum foil
- paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- plastic storage containers
- flashlight and extra batteries
- signal flare
- non-electric can opener
- plastic trash bags
- needle and thread
- ABC-type fire extinguisher
- medicine dropper and measuring spoons
- whistle
- plastic sheeting/tarpaulin
- paper and pencil

Sanitary items such as toilet paper, towelettes, soap, liquid detergent, personal hygiene items, household chlorine bleach (without scent) and coffee filters (for water sanitation) should be in the kit.

If you have a baby, you'll want to include formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk, medications and baby food, while adults with special needs may want to include items such as heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin, prescription drugs, denture needs, contact lens and supplies, extra eyeglasses or incontinence products. If you have pets, be sure to include food, extra water, litter and medications. You may also want to include games and books for entertainment.

While dealing with an emergency is almost always a challenge, a disaster will be much less difficult if you spend some time now and assemble a complete disaster supply kit.

For more information on disaster preparedness and recovery, contact your county Cooperative Extension center or visit the Web site <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/disaster>.

