

PREPARING YOUR FAMILY EMERGENCY KIT

**IF YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT
PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY, CONTACT YOUR
LOCAL EXTENSION OFFICE AT**

Janie Burney, Associate Professor
Family and Consumer Sciences



If your family experienced a disaster, would you be prepared? Disasters can be natural, such as a flood, fire or ice storm or manmade, such as a chemical spill or an act of terrorism. When disaster strikes, you often have little time to gather your family and belongings and find a safe place. If you have to stay in your home, you may not have electricity or water. You need to be prepared.

As a parent, your children depend on you for food and water. Every family should have an emergency kit of supplies. There are many recommended items, but the most important are water and food.

START WITH THE BASICS

Water. You need a gallon of water per family member per day for drinking and sanitation. Plan for at least three days. You may need more if —

- You are or have a nursing mother in the family.
- You or someone else in the family is ill.
- Weather is warm.

Store water in clean, plastic bottles, such as soft drink bottles. Or, purchase already bottled water.

Visit the UT Extension Web site at
<http://www.utextension.utk.edu/> and
the Family and Consumer Sciences Web site at
<http://www.utextension.utk.edu/fcs/>

SP625-5M-8/04 E12-5315-00-007-05 05-0020

Copyright 2004 The University of Tennessee. All rights reserved. This document may be reproduced and distributed for nonprofit educational purposes providing that credit is given to University of Tennessee Extension.

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Food. Include enough nonperishable food to feed each person in the family for at least three days. Choose foods that require no refrigeration, no cooking, and little or no water. These are some useful, nonperishable foods:

- Canned meats, such as tuna or chicken
- Canned entrees, such as spaghetti or stews
- Canned vegetables
- Canned fruit and juices
- Peanut butter
- Protein, granola or fruit bars
- Dried fruit
- Nuts
- Crackers in a waterproof bag or container
- Pasteurized milk that does not need refrigeration

MORE NECESSITIES

Taking Care of Infants. Babies require special foods and supplies, such as

- Powdered or concentrated formula with enough water to mix according to package directions, or ready-to-feed formula.
- Bottles.
- Baby foods.
- Crackers and teething biscuits.
- Cereal in jars, or infant cereal in a box with enough water or milk to mix.
- Diapers and wipes.
- Blankets.

You'll also need these.

- A manual can-opener
- Paper cups and plates, plastic eating utensils (include small spoons for young children)
- Clean cloths or paper towels
- Soap
- Cash, food stamps or a way to purchase food

THESE ARE ALSO IMPORTANT

The Comfort of Familiar Foods and Meals Together. Your family, especially your children, will be upset, anxious and need comforting. Eat at regular times and stick to normal routines as much as possible. Include some of your family's favorite varieties of these items:

- Cookies
- Dry, ready-to-eat cereal
- Candy
- Peanut butter and crackers
- Juice boxes
- Trail mix

You can pretend you are having a picnic to give children something fun to do. Telling stories and playing games will also help keep children occupied.

A Treasure Chest for Children. Store a box or container of objects for your children with your family emergency kit. Let your children pick items to put in the container, such as toys, books, pictures and foods.

USEFUL TIPS

- Know where to find these quickly: personal identification, supplies of prescription medications (a month's supply is recommended), copies of medical histories, car keys, bank card, checkbook.
- Rotate the food items in your emergency kit about every six months to keep them fresh. Also rotate vitamins and medications. Canned foods can be stored for two years and still maintain their quality.
- Pay attention to packaging. If the package isn't waterproof, store the item inside a plastic bag or sealed container.
- Include first aid items such as acetaminophen, antibiotic creams and adhesive bandages.
- Contact the American Red Cross to get a complete list of everything that should go in a family disaster supply kit.