

# The Basics of Preparedness- The time is NOW!

**1. Stock your home pantry with 8 weeks of non-perishable food and water.** (2 weeks of food at the very minimum something is better than nothing). Contact your local food pantry for assistance if you cannot afford to stock ahead. This food will cover you in case there are any interruptions to receiving adequate food supplies. You may require the assistance of other family members or you may need to assist family members (or even neighbors) in accomplishing this task. Ensure enough water for one gallon per person each day, minimum. 6 gallons per person per day is the current full recommendation. Remember to include enough for your pets! Water supplies can be either stored clean water, or as the means to purify water from outside sources like wells or springs. Even if you store water, make preparations for alternate water source disinfection. Water purifiers to disinfect municipal water supplies, local lake or stream water, rain water or other surface water that may be available are available through most camping stores or online from cabelas.com. Since the government suggests that there may be gaps in electric, natural gas or propane service, if you store foods that need to be cooked, plan for alternative cooking methods, such as fires, charcoal/gas grills or camp stoves,. (Never burn charcoal inside your home.)

**2. Stock your Medicine cabinet with all necessary prescription and non-prescription over the counter medications.** If possible, obtain a 1-3 month supply of essential medications for all family members. Remember to include three months worth of over the counter needs like sanitary supplies, acetaminophen, and cold medicine. (Toilet paper!)

**3. Prepare a first aid emergency kit for your family.** Include any special medical items (N95 masks, plastic gloves, hand sanitizer, alcohol) in addition to basic first aid items. Prepare for disabled or elderly persons who may not be able to care for themselves during a pandemic. Extra supplies may include nebulizers, hearing aids and batteries, walkers, wheelchairs, oxygen, scooter batteries, and other medical supplies. Making your residence accessible for disabled and elderly family members will ensure their safety.

**4. Collect and make copies of all important documents** -- including medical records, a list of all relatives with names, addresses and phone numbers for emergency contact. Also include copies of family birth certificates, wedding certificates, firearms licenses, passports, driver licenses, law enforcement credentials, military ID cards and any other important documents that may be required for identification, travel or special purpose-store in a water proof and washable container. Include a letter from a utility company that proves residency of your home.

**5. Prepare for possible interruptions in electric service** with battery-powered lights, a radio, and a supply of batteries. Baygen radios require no batteries and run ½ hour on 60 turns of a small handle. Home Depot carries solar recharged lamps. Consider obtaining a generator and storing fuel. As always store fuels in an approved fuel containers. Don't forget to add Stabilizer! Make preparations for disruptions in heating fuel supplies including fuel oil, natural gas, propane, and normal wood delivery. This may include heavy blankets, sleeping bags, or sweaters. A winter freestanding backpacking tent setup inside will retain body heat at night.

**6. Create a family emergency plan and keep in a special folder.** This could include a first aid and survival book. Include plans on where to meet if separated during an emergency. Remember to keep some cash on hand. All cell phones on and charged.

**7. Protect your family by practicing healthy habits -- stop the spread of germs.** Wash hands often, and cover your mouth and nose when sneezing. Sneeze into the bend in your arm and not your hands. Practice social distancing.

Michael Osterholm, a member of the Health and Human Services Advisory Council on Public Health Preparedness, says "There may be mandatory and/or voluntary closings of national, state and even local borders. Be prepared for public panic." "Imagine," he said, "a 12-18 month global blizzard." Osterholm says "Look at the Katrina disaster for things that went awry. Twenty to thirty percent of workers may be out at any time due to illness or other family members being ill. That means that supply chains for money, food, electricity, and other necessities may be slowed or halted entirely. Have a family plan in place for alternatives."