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Building a Family Emergency Supply Kit

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Disasters and emergency situations can happen anytime and anywhere. When disaster strikes, you may not have much time to respond, so it is important that you and your family are prepared. A hurricane, winter storm, earthquake, flood, tornado or any other disaster could cut off utility services for days and lead to evacuations or confine your family to your home for days. By taking the time to develop a family emergency plan and assemble a family emergency kit you can help to keep your family safe and make a bad situation a little more tolerable.

To prepare a family emergency kit

Create a checklist from the items listed below as well as items that you feel would be necessary for your own personal comfort and safety. Gather the supplies that are listed and store them in one or two watertight easy to store containers. Place the supplies you'd most likely need for an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container. These supplies are listed with an asterisk (*).

Water*

Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles or plastic milk jugs. Avoid using containers that will break, such glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need more.

Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation)*
Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household.

Food*

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, little preparation or cooking and little or no water. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup (if powdered, store extra water)
- Staples--sugar, salt, pepper
- High energy foods--peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods--cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags

First Aid Kit*

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages (3)
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers

Needle
Moistened towelettes
Antiseptic
Thermometer
Tongue blades (2)
Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
Assorted sizes of safety pins
Cleansing agent/soap
Latex gloves (2 pair)
Sunscreen

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Non-prescription drugs

Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
Anti-diarrhea medication
Antacid (for stomach upset)
Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
Laxative
Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)
Contact your local American Red Cross chapter to obtain a basic first aid manual.

Tools and Supplies

Gather supplies that will assist in making you and your family feel safe, secure and as comfortable as possible during times of emergency.

Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils*
Emergency preparedness manual*
Battery-operated radio and extra batteries*
Flashlight and extra batteries*
Cash or traveler's checks, change*
Non-electric can opener, utility knife*
Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type
Tube tent
Pliers, hammer, screwdriver, camping saw, camping shovel and other basic hand-tools.
Duct tape
Plastic sheeting or plastic tarps
Compass
Matches in a waterproof container
Butane lighter
Aluminum foil
Plastic storage containers
Locking plastic bags
Signal flare
Paper, pencil
Needles, thread
Medicine dropper
Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
Whistle
Insect repellent
Map of the area (for locating shelters)
Sanitation
Toilet paper, sanitary wipes*
Soap, liquid detergent*
Feminine supplies*
Personal hygiene items*
Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)*
Plastic bucket with tight lid
Disinfectant
Household chlorine bleach

Clothing and Bedding

*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots*
- Hat and gloves
- Rain gear*
- Thermal underwear
- Blankets or sleeping bags*
- Sunglasses

Special Items

Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

For Baby*

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

For Adults*

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

Entertainment--games and books.

Important Family Documents

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container.

- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

SUGGESTIONS AND REMINDERS

Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the Family Emergency Kit in the trunk of your car. Keep items in air-tight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Rotate your stored food every six months. Re-evaluate your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc. Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.