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Prepping: A Beginner's Guide – Essential Items Needed for Disaster Preparation (Pt. 2)

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As humans, we are naturally aware of possible threats around us, and often the way a person neutralizes that threat is to create a story of the worse case scenario and begin to prep around that. Becoming a person who preps for disasters begins with a level of awareness. A prepper knows that there are possible threats, and it only makes sense to be as prepared as possible beginning with elemental disaster items to sustain basic needs (food, water, clothing and shelter) and then adding more preparedness layers onto it. Basic disaster items are intended to sustain a person and their family for 3-5 days. However, many decide to expand their disaster supplies to encompass a longer duration in the case that emergency response is delayed. This is why preppers believe in having "back ups for their back ups."

Getting Started

When preparing for a disaster, it is essential to have provisions in place to secure your needs. That being said, beginning a food supply must begin with research. Finding out how many [calories](#) ^[1] a person needs per day in order to survive, and knowing how much [food to store](#) ^[2] is essential when beginning to prepare. Additionally, going to survival/prepping forums to read about what others are doing is another way of finding more research. Preppers are very open to helping others who want to prepare. We have all been at the beginning stage of preparing, and it can be overwhelming at first, but the overall goal is to get people prepared.

When beginning to get preparations in place, concentrate of the basic needs of survival: water, food, shelter, clothing and move on from there. Below are some basic suggestions on items that would be ideal to have in the home:

Water

It is suggested to have 1 gallon of water per person/per day. Having a 3 day supply of [water](#) ^[3] on hand is a great place to start. However, many preppers like to be as thorough as possible in their prepping. Therefore, Ready Nutrition suggests to play it safe and double the amount of water needed. The extra water can be used for other purposes. Additional water storage for longer term use can be reviewed [here](#) ^[4]. Extra water that is stored can also be used if family members such as children or the elderly become dehydrated and need more water. Additionally, having an alternative source for water such as a water filter, frozen water in the freezer, and 5 gallon water containers is suggested. In a disaster situation, a person does not want to run out of water. Lakes and streams can also be a way to find water, but the water needs to be treated. In the case that someone is not near any running streams or lakes, there are places in nature where one can find alternative water sources.

Food

Comparative shopping at the large volume supermarkets typically has better deals than at the smaller stores. Finding local ads from the large supermarket store websites can save on gas money as well as on shopping time. Even the Dollar stores carry canned goods and food products that would be good for short term/long term food supplies. Look for sales at the stores and buy as much of the item as your budget will allow.

Using a food storage [calculator](#) ^[5] will help determine how much food is necessary. There are some considerations to keep in mind before purchasing the food items:

- Expiration Dates – It's best to find items that have expiration dates that are 1-2 years away from expiring, unless that item is used frequently in the home, and can be rotated frequently.
- Items on Sale – Go for the deals. Typically, there are deals that are advertised in the newspaper. There are stores that have 10 items for \$10, or 2 for 1 offers. You do not have to break the bank to get food items. Just get a little each time you visit the store. In season vegetables are typically cheaper. Larger cans of goods generally have better deals.
- The amount of people in the household.
- A wide variety of food will help reduce food fatigue.
- The serving amount in the food.
- Vitamin content in the food.
- Any special health considerations for family members.

Medical Supplies

Medical emergencies can occur at the drop of a hat, and having the necessary supplies can mean the difference between life and death. When an [emergency](#) ^[6] situation arises, one must act calming and decisively. In the case of a severe injury where there is a lot of blood loss, there must be supplies that can stop bleeding, cut the pain threshold and calm the patient if necessary. Find websites online that deal with first aid care and go through each injury to see what medical instruments and items are needed. Moreover, check in your community and see if the Fire Department, American Red Cross or Medical Centers offer classes to assist in medical emergencies. Make a [list](#) ^[7] for supplies that can be added to the disaster medical supplies.

Here are a few e-books that were found on this subject:

- [First Aid Full Manual](#) ^[8]
- [Emergency War Surgery](#) ^[9]
- [First Aid for Dental Emergencies](#) ^[10]

72 Hour Bags

In the case that a person has to evacuate, having a prepared [72 hour kit or bug out bag](#) ^[11] will expedite the process of leaving as well as keeping things running as smoothly as possible. A 72 hour bag should have all items necessary to survive for 3 days. When preparing a bag keep the main surviving points is mind (water, food, shelter, clothing). Having a separate [bug out bag for the vehicle](#) ^[12] will also come in handy in the event that someone has to leave their home immediately.

Tools

Tools are a valuable commodity when it comes to survival. Their usefulness for hunting, digging, cutting, communicating and for navigational purposes are all essential items to have on hand.

- Knives (to cut large machete type and a smaller Gerber hunter)
- Multi-tool
- Camping shovels
- Candles
- Hammer or hatchet
- Collapsible fishing pole with hooks, line, bobbers, etc.
- Flares
- Maps, compass or GPS devices (Having extra compasses ensures that navigation is accurate).
- Rope (paracord),
- Knife sharpening stone,
- Flash light with extra batteries

Written Survival Sources

In a high stress situation that some are not used to, forgetfulness plays a part from dealing with all the changes that are occurring. Having some manuals to look upon for survival information, or for spiritual information to lift the morale is a good idea and does not take up much space in a pack.

- Survival Manuals
- First Aid Manuals
- Survival e-books
- Native American Handbooks
- Boy Scouts Handbooks

Understanding how to survive in different scenarios requires one to constantly be learning in order to be as prepared as possible. Prepping is a passion for some. For others it is simply to keep their family as safe as possible. Whatever the reasoning is behind why you have decided to prep, you will be better off in the long run.

read [Part 1](#) ^[13] of this series and learn why preparing for emergencies is so important.

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URLs in this post:

[1] calories: <http://nutrition.about.com/od/changeyourdiet/a/calguide.htm>

[2] food to store: <http://lds.about.com/library/bl/faq/blcalculator.htm>

[3] water: http://readynutrition.com/resources/are-you-ready-series-emergency-water-supply_16112009/

[4] here: http://readynutrition.com/resources/having-a-water-supply-during-a-long-term-disaster_25032010/

[5] calculator: http://readynutrition.com/resources/essential-prepping-calculators_13022010/

[6] emergency: http://readynutrition.com/resources/emergency-medical-supply_09112009/

[7] list: http://readynutrition.com/resources/storing-medical-supplies_18122009/

[8] First Aid Full Manual: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/4089404/First-Aid-Full-Manual-FM2111>

[9] Emergency War Surgery: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/379402/Emergency-War-Surgery>

[10] First Aid for Dental Emergencies: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/19861748/First-Aid-for-Dental-Emergencies>

[11] 72 hour kit or bug out bag: <http://readynutrition.com> Flood waters have microorganisms such as e. coli that can infect a person and cause them to have serious illnesses or injury.

[12] bug out bag for the vehicle: http://readynutrition.com/resources/vehicle-72-hour-kits_04122009/

[13] Part 1: http://readynutrition.com/resources/prepping-basic-beginners-guide-why-prep_16022010/

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