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Week 26 of 52: Emergency Sanitation Preparedness (List 2)

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In 2010, after a devastating earthquake leveled Haiti, people all over the world wanted to help. Despite all of the aid pouring in, the reconstruction process was put on hold in order to deal with a cholera outbreak, an illness spread from the contamination of food and water. This epidemic was caused by open-defecation and could have been avoided if individuals knew where and how to properly expel waste.

Ready for the shocker? It is a documented fact that more people die after a disaster due to poor sanitation than from the disaster itself. You can do everything right regarding emergency sanitation measures, but that will in no way protect you from all those around you who did not. During times of extended disasters, those that live in close proximity to one another will be at the greatest risk for contracting illnesses from unsanitary conditions. Teaming up with those around you to create a community led sanitation system can assist in avoiding epidemics caused from unsanitary conditions. In this case, the group as a whole takes full responsibility for its success and will see fewer instances of illness.

Quite simply, wherever humans gather, their waste also accumulates. This creates a perfect storm for E. coli and bacteria to invade most of everything that you touch. Not to mention carrying the risk of infectious disease, particularly to vulnerable groups such as the very young, the elderly and people suffering from diseases that lower their resistance. Fly infestations can also pose a problem for sanitation, and if waste is left out in the open, then it will lead to the possibility of epidemics. The following are a few examples of structures that can be built to maintain sanitation during a longer-term disaster:

- Simple [pit latrines](#) ^[1] are the easiest and cheapest way to dispose of waste.
- Ventilated latrine and an odorless earth closet that prevents fly infestations, are also good choices. Learn more by [clicking here](#) ^[2].
- Decomposing toilets are above ground latrines that are another option and once the waste is decomposed, it can be used in the garden. [Click here for more information](#) ^[3].

Ever hear of [humanure](#) ^[4]? Solid and liquid waste can be decomposed and composted to be used in the garden. For more information on using liquid waste in the garden, [click here](#) ^[5].

Toilet paper is always a concern for emergency preparations, however, there are alternatives and in a long-term scenario you will need to begin thinking outside the box. Some off-gridders use rags and thoroughly wash the soiled cloth for other uses. However, if you are opposed to this, other alternatives are available and can be viewed [here](#) ^[6]. And for the lovers of disposable toilet paper, you can purchase larger quantities online at [Amazon](#) ^[7] or at [online janitorial supply stores](#) ^[8]. According to Wikipedia, one American person uses an average of 23.6 rolls of toilet paper per year. In a long term disaster, toilet paper will be a hard to find luxury item and could be a great [bartering item](#) ^[9]. I would like to add however, that stocking up on thousands of rolls of toilet paper will take up a lot of space. So having some on hand for extended emergencies is a good idea, however, for longer term scenarios, you may need to get creative.

Because we are getting into more longer term preparedness items, you want to find prep items that are multi-functional in order to be as efficient as possible. Soap nuts are a great multipurpose prep item. They are cheap, have [many uses](#) ^[10], and can be composted after use. Soap, both antibacterial and regular, can also be purchased in bulk from your local dollar store.

Preps To Buy:

- 2 weeks or longer toilet paper
- Cat litter
- Bleach
- 5 gallon bucket
- Clothespins
- [Laundry plunger](#) ^[11] (optional)
- [Wash boards](#) ^[12] (optional)
- 2 large storage bins to do laundry
- [Women's sanitary needs](#) ^[13]
- Soap or a multipurpose alternative (in bulk)
- Hand sanitizer (in bulk)
- Mesh screening to use for long term latrine
- Space bags to store toilet paper

Action Items:

1. Ensure that you have sanitary items for all members of the family, including women, children and elderly.
2. If you have not done so, create a [sanitation kit](#) ^[14] for the home.
3. Print this [Hesperian health guide](#) ^[15] on sanitation and add it to your [emergency manual](#) ^[16].

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URLs in this post:

[1] pit latrines:

http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/emergencies/fs3_4.pdf

[2] clicking here:

http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/emergencies/fs3_5.pdf

[3] Click here for more information: <http://youtu.be/2VTFjaIWLOY>

[4] humanure: <http://humanurehandbook.com/instructions.html>

[5] click here: http://readynutrition.com/resources/better-tomatoes-via-a-fertilizer-of-human-urine_24042010/

[6] here: http://readynutrition.com/resources/if-the-shit-is-going-to-hit-the-fan-make-sure-you-have-toilet-paper_04102009/

[7] Amazon: http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=bulk+toilet+paper

[8] online janitorial supply stores: <http://www.generaljan.com/index.php?file=categorylist&catid=86>

[9] bartering item: http://readynutrition.com/resources/the-barter-boom_01122009/

[10] many uses: http://readynutrition.com/resources/soap-nuts-who-knew_10112011/

[11] Laundry plunger:

http://www.lehmans.com/store/Home_Goods___Laundry___Washing___Rapid_Laundry_W
Args=

[12] Wash boards:

http://www.lehmans.com/store/Home_Goods___Laundry___Washing___Lehman_s__Own_
Args=

[13] Women's sanitary needs: http://readynutrition.com/resources/shtf-survival-womens-health_13012011/

[14] sanitation kit: http://readynutrition.com/resources/what-to-do-when-the-sanitation-hits-the-fan_22122010/

[15] Hesperian health guide: http://hesperian.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/environmental/EHB_Sanitation_EN_watermark.pdf

[16] emergency manual: http://readynutrition.com/resources/good-manuals-every-family-should-have-one_22102009/

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