

EMERGENCY ESSENTIALS®

PREP 101



FOOD STORAGE

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Introduction: Why Store Food?

Like water, food is essential to survival. In a natural disaster, the food supply we rely on every day can be disrupted or cut off. In this situation, having an emergency supply at home ensures you and your loved ones are provided for. Another (more likely) crisis would be the loss of a job or reduction in income. Food storage allows you to feed your family when you're unable to obtain food from third-party sources for whatever



reason. Storing food for an emergency involves more than just buying a few cases of canned ravioli or a bucket of wheat (though those are both great ideas). Building an emergency food supply is a process that involves careful planning and discipline. While a one-year supply of food for the whole family is ideal, not all of us can do it at once (we'll talk about long-term food storage in later modules). However, if you take it one small step at a time, you'll be surprised how quickly your supply will grow.

1. Planning your Food Storage

Before we get into what and how much to store, let's talk about the process of planning your food storage. Some of the basic ideas behind food storage

planning include:

- Keep a record of what your family likes to eat. As you keep track of what your family eats (and enjoys eating), you'll get a better sense of what to store.
- Make a menu. If your family doesn't already have a regular menu rotation of meals, doing so can get them used to eating the same foods regularly. Make sure the ingredients you store are non-perishable (more on that later). Collect recipes your family enjoys and make a menu for a few weeks or months. Depending on your family's tastes, you can repeat the menu every week, two weeks, month, etc. Your menu should include breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks.
- Incorporate food storage items into your grocery list. As you prepare for an emergency, your everyday life continues. Adding the stress of a major project like building a food storage supply is just too much, right? Actually, it's a lot easier than you might think. We'll tell you how later. Planning food storage doesn't have to be a chore. Have fun and try new recipes using the ingredients your family already eats. Doing so gives you and your family an opportunity to try new things while preparing for a crisis.

TIPS FOR PLANNING FOOD STORAGE

1. Keep a record of the foods your family eats regularly (and likes).
2. Make a regular menu of your family's favorite recipes.
3. Incorporate food storage items into your grocery list.
4. Have fun and try new things.

2. What Food to Store

Once you've determined which menu items your family likes (and is willing to eat regularly), it's time to make a "food storage menu." This menu will contain the recipes your family likes, but with only non-perishable (canned or dry) versions of the ingredients. You can also try out new recipes that use only non-perishable items. This will help you know what to store. A well-planned food storage menu will help maintain comfort and familiarity in a crisis.

You can start building your emergency food storage with as little as a week's worth of food. It's likely that many of the foods your family eats (like fruits, vegetables, bread, milk, cheese, meat, etc.) either have a short shelf life or need to be refrigerated. Having at least a three-month supply of non-perishable versions of those foods is ideal for getting you through most emergencies. Non-perishable foods include canned goods and dry goods. Canned goods might contain things like fruits, vegetables, meats, soups, or pasta dishes. Dry goods may be items such as pasta, rice, just-add-water mixes, or dehydrated fruit. Also consider trying some new recipes that use non-perishable items. It may be wise not to count on your frozen foods as part of your three-month supply because they can thaw and spoil during an extended power outage. According to the USDA, "The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed."¹ In an extended blackout, be sure to use up frozen foods within this timeframe.

Be aware of the expiration or use-by dates on all items you store. One way to ensure

the freshness of your supply is to buy a few extra items each time you shop (especially if there's a good sale) and rotate. Just put the newest items on the back of the shelf and replace as needed.

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3. How Much Food to Store

In an emergency situation, calories are the top priority. Each member of the family, depending on gender and age, will have different caloric needs. Knowing this can help you determine how many calories you need to store per person per day. The following chart is based on USDA recommendations (found on www.ChooseMyPlate.gov):

Age & Gender	Daily Calorie Needs*
Children 2-3 Years	1,000 - 1,400 Cal
Children 4-8 Years	1,200 - 2,000 Cal
Girls 9-13 Years	1,400 - 2,200 Cal
Boys 9-13 Years	1,600 - 2,600 Cal
Girls 14-18 Years	1,800 - 2,400 Cal
Boys 14-18 Years	2,000 - 3,200 Cal
Females 19-30 Years	1,800 - 2,400 Cal
Males 19-30 Years	2,400 - 3,000 Cal
Females 31-50 Years	2,400 - 3,000 Cal
Males 31-50 Years	2,200 - 3,000 Cal
Females 51+ Years	1,600 - 2,200 Cal
Male 51+ Years	2,000 - 2,800 Cal

*Amounts depend on activity level from sedentary to active.

[1] USDA Food Safety and Inspection Services. "Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency" www.fsis.usda.gov/web.access 10 Oct 2012

Remember, not all calories are created equal. Empty calories, like those in junk food, provide energy, but little or no nutrition. Make sure you store foods that provide calories as well as the nutrition your family needs. Overall, your food storage should provide a balance of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Conclusion:

For most people, building a food storage supply is a process, so you don't have to do it all at once. Making and implementing a food storage plan will help you prepare for a crisis, whether personal or otherwise. Start your emergency food supply with foods your family already likes to eat, as well as newly discovered favorites. This will help you gain a sense of security now and give your family a sense of normalcy in a crisis.



QUIZ

1. Which of the following steps is part of food storage planning?

- a) Keep a record of what your family likes to eat.
- b) Collect recipes your family enjoys and make a menu for a few weeks or months.
- c) Incorporate food storage items into your grocery list.
- d) All of the above.

2. Food storage gives you and your family an opportunity to try new things while preparing for a crisis.

- a) True
- b) False

3. Food storage experts recommend building a _____-month emergency food supply of the non-perishable foods your family already eats.

- a) 6
- b) 1
- c) 3

4. Foods you store should be:

- a) Frozen
- b) Non-perishable
- c) Fresh

5. In an emergency situation, the top priority is:

- a) Protein
- b) Vitamins
- c) Calories

6. All Calories have the same nutritional value.

- a) True
- b) False

QUICK REFERENCE

TIPS FOR PLANNING FOOD STORAGE

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- Make a regular menu of your family's favorite recipes.
- Incorporate food storage items into your grocery list.
- Have fun and try new things.

WHAT FOOD TO STORE

- Eat what you store, store what you eat.
- Start with a 3-month supply.
- Rotate stored food regularly.

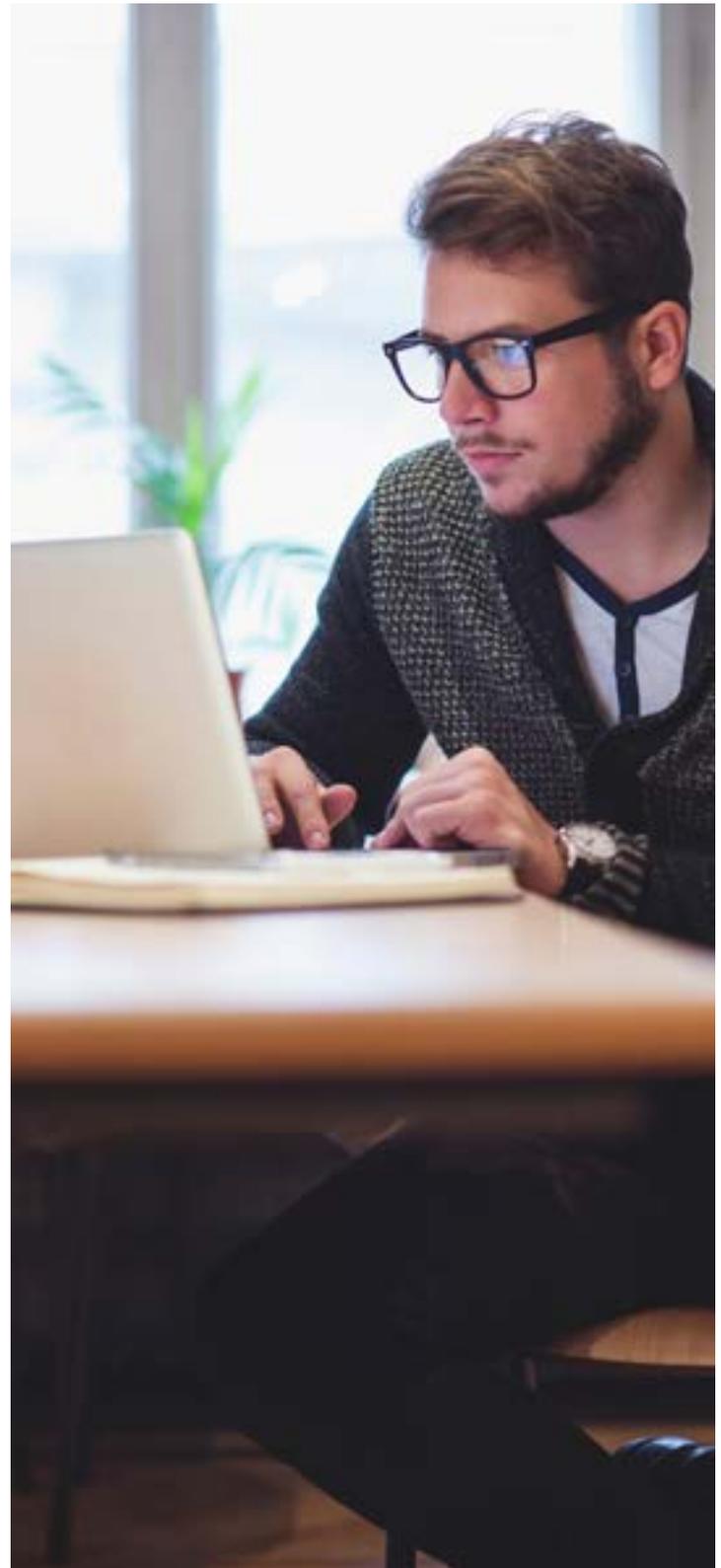
HOW MUCH FOOD TO STORE

- Calories are the top priority. Determine your/your family's caloric needs.
- Not all calories are created equal. Focus on quality nutrition.

Age & Gender	Daily Calorie Needs*
Children 2-3 Years	1,000 - 1,400 Cal
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FOOD STORAGE **MENUS**

MONTH 1						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

MONTH 2						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

FOOD STORAGE SHOPPING LIST

1. Think about (or talk to your household about) recipes that are favorites and how to make them food storage meals.

- What fresh ingredients are used? Is there a suitable long term food storage substitute?

2. Once you have a variety of recipes that you think can be made with food storage, try making them, using only food storage ingredients (you can buy MyChoice™ cans to try out food storage items that are new to you while you're still experimenting).

3. Add the successful recipes (and recipes you know you won't need to experiment with) onto your Food Storage menu calendar.

4. Take an inventory of your current food storage.

- Figure out and record what you've got on hand.
- Determine how much you should have on hand.
- Make plans to purchase the difference if you don't have enough stored already.

5. Take small steps to add to your first three months' worth of storage:

- Add a few items to your shopping list each week/month that will go straight into your food storage—you'll have a growing supply before you know it.
- Collect spare change for a month and buy an extra can or two of beans, or an extra package of pasta, etc. to put into food storage. It's money you won't even miss.

6. Think about how many calories you'll need to store for a 3-month supply of every-day foods.

- How many days' worth of food do you think you have on hand, after taking inventory of your current stored food?

7. Set up a rotation system so your every-day (3-month supply) food storage items are regularly used in the order they were purchased.

