



# DODGE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Prevention - Preparedness - Mitigation - Response -Recovery

## Food and Water in an Emergency

If a disaster disrupts your community, you may lose access to food, water and power for days or even weeks. Preparing now ensures your family has what it needs.

Clean water is the highest priority. An active adult should drink at least two quarts per day, and hot weather can double that. Children, nursing mothers, and those with medical needs require even more. Plan for cooking and hygiene as well. Store a minimum of one gallon of water per person, per day and aim for at least a two week supply for every household member.

If your supply gets tight, do not ration. Drink what your body needs and work on finding more. You can reduce water demands by limiting activity and staying cool.

## WATER SUPPLIES

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### How to Store Water

Use only clean plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never reuse anything that once held toxic substances. Soft-drink bottles work well. Food-grade plastic buckets or drums are acceptable options.

Seal containers tightly, label them and store in a cool, dark location. Replace stored water every six months.

### Emergency Outdoor Water Sources

If you must collect water outside your home, several natural and man-made sources may be available. Safe options include:

- Rainwater
- Streams, rivers and other moving bodies of water
- Ponds and lakes
- Natural springs

All outdoor water must be treated before drinking. Avoid any water with floating debris, strong odors or a dark or cloudy appearance. Never drink flood water.

### Hidden Water Sources in Your Home

If you are caught without stored water, you can draw on several indoor sources. Usable options include the water in your hot water heater, the water already in your pipes and any ice you have on hand. As a last resort, you can use the water in the toilet's tank, not the bowl.

Know where your home's main water valve is located. Shut it off immediately if you hear reports of broken water or sewer lines to prevent contamination from entering your system.

To access water from your pipes, open the highest faucet in the house to let air into the system. Once the air breaks the vacuum, collect water from the lowest faucet.

To use the water in your hot water heater, make sure the gas or electricity is turned off. Open the drain valve at the bottom of the tank. Start the flow by closing the cold-water intake valve and opening a hot-water faucet. Do not restore power or gas until the tank is completely refilled.

## Three Ways to Treat Water

Contaminated water can carry serious diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis. Treat any water of uncertain quality before using it for drinking, cooking, or hygiene. No single method is perfect. In some cases, combining methods is the most effective approach.

Before treatment, allow particles to settle or strain the water through paper towel or a clean cloth.

### Boiling:

Boiling is the most reliable method for killing microorganisms. Bring the water to a rolling boil for three to five minutes. Expect some loss due to evaporation. Let it cool before drinking. To improve the taste, reintroduce oxygen by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This also helps with stored water.

### Disinfection:

Regular, unscented household liquid bleach containing 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite can be used to kill microbes. Do not use scented bleach, color-safe products or anything with added cleaners.

Add sixteen drops per gallon of water. Stir and let stand for thirty minutes. If you do not detect a faint bleach smell, repeat the dose and wait another fifteen minutes. Use only household bleach for disinfection. Do not rely on iodine or water-treatment products that do not contain the correct concentration of sodium hypochlorite.

### Distillation:

Distillation removes microbes that resist other treatments and also eliminates heavy metals, salts, and most chemicals. To distill water, fill a pot halfway. Tie a cup to the lid's handle so it hangs upright when the lid is inverted but does not touch the water. Boil the pot for twenty minutes. The vapor will condense on the lid, drip into the cup and form distilled water.

## FOOD SUPPLIES

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### When Food Supplies Are Low

If you reduce activity, a healthy adult can function on roughly half their normal food intake for a long period and can tolerate no food at all for several days. Food can be rationed safely, but do not restrict intake for children or pregnant women.

If water is limited, avoid high-fat and high-protein foods. Skip salty items that increase thirst. Favor salt-free crackers, whole-grain cereals and canned foods with a high liquid content.

You do not need specialty products for an emergency pantry. Your existing canned goods, dry mixes, and basic staples work well. Familiar foods matter because they maintain morale and provide a sense of stability during a crisis. Canned foods are particularly useful since they require no cooking, no added water and no special preparation. Recommended short-term storage plans follow on the next page.

### When Food Supplies Are Low

When building your food supply, account for your household's specific needs and preferences. Choose items your family will actually eat and that provide meaningful calories and nutrition. Foods that do not require refrigeration, preparation, or cooking are the most practical.

People with medical diets or allergies need focused attention, as do infants, toddlers, and older adults. Nursing mothers may need ready-to-use liquid formula if breastfeeding becomes difficult. Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups can be useful for those who are ill or elderly.

## How to Cook If the Power Goes Out

You can cook using a fireplace, charcoal grill, or camp stove, but use grills and stoves outdoors only. Smaller options like candle warmers, chafing dishes and fondue pots can heat food as well. Canned foods can be eaten cold. If you choose to heat them in the can, open the can first and remove the label.

## Short-Term Food Supplies

While a two-week food interruption is unlikely, you should prepare for it. The simplest way to build a two-week reserve is to increase the quantity of the basic foods you already keep on hand.

## Storage Tips

- Store food in a cool, dry place, preferably in the dark.
- Keep all food covered at all times.
- Open boxes and cans carefully so they can be closed tightly after use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags and store them in sealed containers.
- Transfer sugar, dried fruits and nuts from opened packages into screw-top jars or airtight containers to protect against pests.
- Check all food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use items before they expire, and rotate supplies by placing new items at the back and older ones in the front.
- Mark dates with ink or a marker.

## Nutrition Tips

During and immediately after a disaster, maintaining strength is essential:

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough fluids - about two quarts a day - to stay properly hydrated.
- Consume sufficient calories to support any necessary work.
- Include vitamin, mineral, and protein supplements in your stockpile to ensure adequate nutrition.

## Shelf-life of Foods for Storage

Here are some general guidelines for rotating common emergency foods.

### Use within six months:

- Powdered milk (boxed)
- Dried fruit (in metal container)
- Dry, crisp crackers (in metal container)
- Potatoes

### Use within one year:

- Canned condensed meat and vegetable soups
- Canned fruits, fruit juices and vegetables
- Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals (in metal containers)
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Hard candy and canned nuts

Vitamin C

### May be stored indefinitely (in proper containers and conditions):

- Wheat
- Vegetable oils
- Dried corn
- Baking powder
- Soybeans
- Instant coffee, tea and cocoa
- Salt
- Noncarbonated soft drinks
- White rice
- Bouillon products
- Dry pasta
- Powdered milk (in nitrogen-packed cans)

## **If the Electricity Goes Off . . .**

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FIRST, use perishable food and foods from the refrigerator.

THEN, use the foods from the freezer. Keep the freezer door closed as much as possible. Post a list of contents on the door to minimize opening. In a full, well insulated freezer, foods with ice crystals in the center are generally safe to eat for up to three days.

FINALLY, begin to use non-perishable foods and staples.

***Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency and American Red Cross***