

Get a Kit

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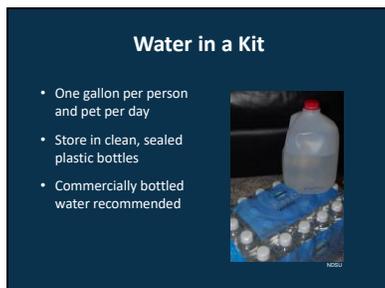
You may need to survive on your own after a disaster. This means having your own food, water and other supplies to last at least three days. The more severe the disaster, the longer you may be on your own. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. That's why it's vital to have a supplies kit on hand to be able to sustain yourself until assistance is available. In addition, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment and telephones may be cut off for days. (www.ready.gov)

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Your home disaster supplies kit should contain essential food, water and supplies for at least three days. Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is stored. Additionally, you may want to consider having supplies for sheltering in your home for up to two weeks. Remember, disaster kits are for survival. Comfort is nice, but sustainability is critical. Do not over pack with things you can live without.

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You will need 1 gallon of water per person and pet per day for at least three days, but try to store at least a week's supply. A half gallon is for drinking and a half gallon is for food preparation and sanitation. Although you may bottle your own water, commercially bottled water is recommended as the safest and most reliable emergency supply of water. Bottled water should be kept in its original container and not opened until needed. Rotate your water supply every six months, and use it before the expiration or "use by" date.

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Food in a Kit

- Nonperishable
- Won't make you thirsty
- High energy
- High liquid content
- Special dietary needs
- Manual can opener



Store at least a three-day supply of nonperishable food. Plan on about 2,000 calories per day per person, and avoid foods that will make you thirsty. Include high-energy foods, such as peanut butter; jelly; low-salt crackers and nuts; granola bars; whole-grain cereals; and canned foods that can be eaten cold, especially those with high liquid content, such as canned fruits. Dry mixes and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water or special preparation also belong in your kit. Include a few comfort or stress-release foods, such as sweetened cereals, candy, instant coffee or cookies. You already may have many of these on hand, but companies sell emergency foods that can be stored for long term.

Remember to consider the dietary needs of infants, older people and those on special diets, and pack a manual can opener. Consider emergency heating and cooking alternative sources, such as a solar oven, solar cooker or alcohol fuel fondue pot.

Follow manufacturers' storage recommendations, and rotate food and water every six months, maybe when daylight-saving time changes.

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Additional Supplies

- Change of clothes
- Portable radio
- Flashlight
- Sanitation Supplies
- Whistle
- Matches
- Comfort items



Additional items for disaster kits include clothing, blankets, personal hygiene items, a battery or windup flashlight, extra batteries, a whistle to blow for help if you need to be found, toilet paper and a plastic pail, cleaning towelettes and other items that would help you carry out your family disaster plan. Be sure to include a battery-powered or windup radio; a NOAA weather radio is best, and many crank ones include USB chargers for smartphones.

Especially if you have young children, include comfort items such as a favorite doll, toy or book in your kit. This item will help to ease stress and transition. Games and cards can comfort adults, too.

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First Aid and Medical Supplies

- Prescription medication
- Specialized medical needs
- First aid kit



Be sure to include prescription medications, other specialized medical supplies and a first aid kit. You can purchase a first aid kit or assemble one at home using checklists available at www.ready.gov or www.redcross.org. Include items such as bandages, gauze pads, scissors, needle, antiseptic, thermometer, safety pins, cleansing agents and latex gloves. Also include nonprescription drugs such as aspirin, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids and any other medications your family uses.

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Kit Storage

- Tightly closed plastic or metal containers
- Toss damaged canned goods
- Use before expired
- Cool, dry place
- Update as needed



Just as important as putting your supplies together is maintaining them so they are safe to use when needed. To keep your supplies ready and in good condition:

- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to protect it from pests and to extend its shelf life.
- Throw out any canned goods that become swollen, dented or corroded.
- Use or discard foods before their expiration date, and replace them with fresh supplies.
- Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in the front.
- Change stored food and water supplies every six months. Be sure to write the date you store the items on all containers.
- Rethink your needs every year and update your kit as your family’s needs change.
- Secure your kit so floods, earthquakes and other disasters won’t tip it over.

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Kit Portability

- Luggage
- Plastic tubs/totes
- Garbage cans
- Backpacks
- Wheeled wagons



Keep your kit in a tub, garbage can, large backpack or duffel bag, or brainstorm other options with your family. The most essential supplies could be in a separate “grab and go” bag inside the tub, but the entire kit should be portable. Think about the people who will be carrying the kit. Kits may need wheels for some family members, while children may prefer their supplies in backpacks. Also, think about where you will store your home kit.

Your family may choose to have one large kit or individual kits for each family member. Each person should prepare his or her own kit and know where it’s located.

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Children

- Prepare and store their kits
- Include comfort items and activities
- Refresh kits and replace clothing as children grow
- Include ID
- Reduces fear



Have children help prepare their own kits and decide where they should be stored. You may find that in their bedroom closets or under their beds may be an appropriate place to store their kits. Include comfort items and activities, such as books, puzzles or small computerized games. Remember to refresh their kits and replace clothing as the children grow. Write out identification information for the children, including cell and out-of-state contact phone numbers, in case the children get separated from you. Involving children in disaster preparedness and being able to carry their own items will help them understand possible situations and reduce their fear.

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Infants

- Formula and bottles
- Baby food
- Diapers and wipes
- Clothing
- Blanket
- Pacifier
- Pain/fever reducer & vitamins
- Toys, books



When packing for an infant, you will need to add items that consume a lot of space. Plan ahead for your child’s needs, and refresh this kit often as the baby grows. Here are some items to consider.

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Older People

- At least 3 days of prescriptions & copies
- Eyeglasses, hearing aids & batteries, oxygen
- Insurance forms, Medicare and Medicaid cards, other documents



Older people especially need to include in their kits prescription medications and copies of the written prescriptions; medical supplies, such as glasses, hearing aids and oxygen; and important documents, such as insurance forms, and Medicare and Medicaid cards. Include in the to-go kit a laminated page listing chronic illnesses, current medications and latest surgeries.

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Pet Kits

- Identify pet-friendly shelters
- Gather pet supplies
- Ensure your pet has proper ID and up-to-date vet records
- Have a pet carrier and leash



Animals also are affected by disasters, so prepare a plan and kit for your pets. Identify possible pet-friendly shelters. For health and safety reasons, pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters, but pets must be included in community disaster evacuation plans and often are sheltered nearby. Gather pet supplies, and ensure your pet has proper ID and up-to-date veterinarian records. Have a pet carrier and leash. Remember that pets need a three-day supply of food and water just like humans. Include medicines, a cat litter pan and plastic bags for waste. Keep all these supplies together in a pet carrier that’s ready to go.

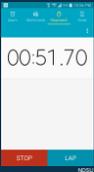
Have a plan in case you can’t get home to care for your pets or evacuate them if an evacuation order is issued and you can’t get home. Maybe talk to a neighbor who’s usually at home.

Pets also can have a hard time adjusting to an unfamiliar environment. To help ease their stress, include familiar items such as a toy or blanket in your pet’s kit.

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Family Activity

- Carry out a pretend activity; explain there’s no actual disaster
- Give each person a pillowcase or garbage bag
- In 5 minutes, have each gather the things they’d need for 3 days
- Discuss what they chose and what’s missing



Here’s an activity parents can use to help children (and some adults) understand the importance of what’s in an emergency kit. First, make sure young children understand this is practice, not a real emergency. Give each family member a pillowcase, garbage bag or similar container, and have them gather things from around the house that they’d need for three days. After five minutes, discuss what each person selected. Based on the supplies selected, will you be hungry? Will you be thirsty? Will you have warm and dry clothing? Did you remember to bring something you want to have with you, like a toy or special photos?

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Car Kits

- General roadside repair supplies
- Jumper cables
- Tire jack
- Spare tire
- Flashlight/flares
- Red scarf or flag
- Basic tool set
- First aid kit



In addition to home and grab-and-go disaster supplies kits, make emergency kits for your cars and workplaces.

What would happen if a disaster struck on your way to or from work or if you were stranded in your car? Each car should have an emergency kit that includes basic vehicle needs but also survival items for family members.

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Car Kits

- Water or container and heat source to melt snow
- High-energy food
- Activity, book
- Pencil & paper
- Winter: blankets/sleeping bags, shovel



Have a basic water and food supply that will have a shelf life suitable for the car. Include a small game, writing pad, activity book or something else to help pass the time if you're stranded. Have a pencil and paper to write a note to leave a message in the vehicle if you leave the site.

A winter survival kit also should include blankets or sleeping bags and a shovel. Include more water during the hot summer. Update car kits as the seasons change.

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Office Kits

- Required medications
- Water
- Food
- Available for sheltering in place or evacuating



Have a miniature version of your personal supply kit where you work. Required medications always should be with you, and keep food and water in case you have to shelter in place or evacuate.

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Get A Kit



Now you have kits for the home, car and office that include appropriate supplies for family members.