

Why Survival Prepping?

No one knows WHAT it will be. It could be a natural disaster or a medical pandemic. Financial system collapse or bioterrorism. Governmental shutdowns or societal breakdowns. The media is full of possible threats, and they seem to be coming at us from all sides these days. No one knows WHEN it will be. It might be today, or tomorrow. Next week or next month. Next year ... or maybe never. But do you want to take a chance on "maybe never"? It pays to be prepared. "Prepare for the worst, pray for the best," as the saying goes. And if there ever was a time to prepare for the worst, NOW is that time. "Survival prepping" is about preparing for the worst. It's about making sure you and your family are safe, no matter what the world throws at you.

It used to be that "preppers" were looked at as paranoid (by those who were being polite) or as whackos or nut cases (by those who weren't). But just look at the events of recent years. Natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, man-made disasters such as Japan's nuclear meltdown, economic crises like those in Europe, unemployment and work shortages in the U.S., even rioting in America's heartland, such as in Wisconsin in 2011. All of these have helped bring survival prepping out of the fringe and into the mainstream. After all, if you care about your family, you want to make sure they are safe, secure, and well-taken care of, no matter what situation you face.

The sane way to look at prepping is to think of it like auto insurance. You don't buy auto insurance hoping to get into an accident. Actually, you pray you don't get into an accident. But the insurance is there because, well, accidents happen, don't they? And you want to be protected in case an accident does happen. It's the same with survival prepping. You don't prep hoping a disaster happens. You prep hoping it doesn't. But you prep because you'll sleep better at night, knowing you and your family have that insurance against the unforeseen. By the way, I know that every once in a while, you'll see a media story that portrays EVERY survivalist as if they were hoping for a disaster to happen, or even working to cause them! I doubt that was ever true. But even if it was, the media is out of step with what's happening today. Prepping is now mainstream. Most preppers today are ordinary people like

your neighbors, your co-workers, and your friends. As today's preppers, we are merely those who are concerned enough about our families to want to make sure they are safe. And we do something about it.

As survival preppers, we often spend time on our GOOD (" get out of Dodge") preparations. These are our preparations for evacuating when problems arise. And there is no doubt that "bugging out" (leaving the area) may be your safest option when a catastrophe occurs. But what if you had no warning of the disaster and couldn't bug out? Or what if the disaster destroys all of your possible escape routes? What if you need to stay in your home for a short while before you can safely bug out? This guide, *Hunkering Down*, focuses on a scenario that would force you to stay in your home - a natural disaster which prevents evacuation. During a natural disaster, you might need to survive for a few days or a few weeks in your home before you can leave or before help arrives - if it ever does arrive!

But don't let the "natural disaster" part of the title fool you. You might hunker down for any number of reasons. No matter what happens that requires you to "bug in" (the opposite of "bug out" or evacuating), this guide can get you started in the right direction. This book contains easy-to-read, direct, to-the-point chapters on the essentials of hunkering down. How to make sure your home is secure. Food storage and preparation. Water storage and purification. Hygiene. First Aid. Communications. The book is written to help you as a new prepper get started. It's for us "regular folk" who want to make sure we are prepared. If you are ready to take those first few steps on the prepper path, this book will help you ensure your family survives, and maybe even thrives, should a disaster strike. Before I close this introduction, I want to talk straight to you here. I know some of you will read this introduction and still be uncertain whether you should buy this book or not. You might be reluctant to spend the money for this book - even though the return on your investment in this book (that is, in keeping your family safe) is ultimately priceless. From that standpoint, the few bucks for this book really are a small price to pay. But if you are still uncertain, here's an experiment you can try to see if you need this book.

Later today, or first thing tomorrow, shut off all the utilities in your home. Shut off your water at the mains. Turn off your electricity at the circuit breaker. Turn off your natural gas. Switch off your phones, internet, and cable.

Now, for the next few hours, you and your family are not to leave your home. You have to stay right where you are. And you are to have no contact with the outside world. How well would you cope? Could you feed your family? Would you have enough water for them to drink? How will you handle them going to the bathroom, and washing and bathing?

How would you find out what's going on during the emergency? What if your spouse or your child becomes injured? What medical problems could you handle? What tools and emergency items do you already have at hand? And most importantly, do you have the information you need to get through this crisis? I know most of you won't try this experiment. I think you should though. It will tell you a lot about how prepared you are. But if you don't try it, at least imagine doing it. Imagine going through all the motions of daily life without access to utilities, computers, or cell phones. How well would you and your family survive in this situation?

If you are certain you'd do well, if you have all the emergency items you need, plus the know-how to use them, then you don't need this book. But if you are uncertain, or have questions, or if even the thought of doing this experiment scares you, it's OK. This book can help. Together, we can put you on the right path to removing that fear and uncertainty. In a short time, we can get you and your family ready to hunker down no matter what disaster or catastrophe happens. I wish all of you and your family health and happiness for ALL times.

What to Expect from a Natural Disaster

You can hunker down for any number of reasons, and everything in this book will help you "bug in" no matter what the situation. But to help us get started, we're going to focus on natural disasters in this book. Nature can be amazingly beautiful, but it can also be dangerous and deadly. Natural disasters are regular occurrences that threaten our property, our food sources, and even our lives. Protecting our families and our homes from these random acts of destruction is vitally important. However, if you are prepared, you have a better chance of coming out the other side with minimal damage. Safeguarding your home and family needs to happen before the disaster. Here are some of the most common natural disasters and what you can do to prepare.

Floods

This is one of the most common natural disasters that occurs in the United States. While floods are thought to occur only near large bodies of water, they can also take place near small creeks and streams. Usually, you will have some warning regarding floods. They normally develop slowly over hours or days of heavy rainfall. But you still need to be prepared for flash floods. Roaring water and debris can cause massive damage to any property or person in its path. There are many precautions you can take if you live in an area that is known to flood.

First, seal your home's foundation with a waterproof compound. You can also build floodwalls to lower the amount of water that seeps into your home. In case of extreme flooding, if water gets into the house, take the following precautions. First, disconnect all electrical appliances and utilities from the source. Next, move to the highest level of your home. Finally, listen to a battery-powered radio for information and directions. Do not attempt to drive through the flood. If you didn't get out before the flood, hunkering down may be your best option.

Earthquakes

Unlike floods, earthquakes generally give no indication that they are about to occur. They are caused when the tectonic plates in the earth's crust suddenly shift, collide, or slide. Depending on how strong the earthquake is, it can severely damage the surface of the earth - and the buildings, bridges, roads that are built on top of the surface. The damage can range from a mild shake that rattles the windows a little bit to extreme displacement of the ground that demolishes buildings. In the most severe cases, thousands of people may wind up dead, with thousands more injured. If you live along a fault line, take these precautions. Make sure that the foundation of your house is stable and that the house is bolted to the foundation. Many earthquake-prone areas have housing contractors that specialize in preparing homes for earthquakes. Check with your local licensing board for contractors, or use an internet search engine to find one that can help. Secure heavy appliances to the floor, such as the water heater and stove. Securing these items is easy.

But if you aren't good at handyman projects or DIY (do-it-yourself), plumbers and electricians can do this work for you. During an earthquake, the injuries people experience are usually caused by falling objects or objects becoming airborne. The best tactic is to "drop, cover, and hold on". Drop down to the ground, then try to crawl under a table or desk. If there is no table or desk, crawl to the nearest interior wall. Get face down, and cover your head and neck with your arms. Hold on until the shaking stops. When the ground stops moving, turn off your water, gas, and electricity until you can assess the damage.

Hurricanes

Hurricanes are defined as the circular flow of winds that exceed 75 miles per hour. They form over tropical waters and move toward land. While islands in tropical waters are at the greatest risk, the coastal areas of a main continent are greatly affected. The damage becomes less intense as the hurricane moves more inland. The extreme winds carry debris and water into the air causing damage and life-threatening situations. Hurricanes usually happen between June and November. If you live in an area prone to hurricanes, you need to have an emergency kit and a weather radio with additional batteries. (See our checklist at the end of the book.)

Hurricanes can generally be predicted, although the strength of the winds is hard to determine. If your area is not being evacuated before the storm, have a safe room that is away from main walls.

You can also fortify your home so it is less likely to be damaged by the extreme winds or flying objects. Contact a housing contractor in your area that specializes in home hurricane prepping.

Tornadoes

A tornado begins to form when a thunderstorm is unstable. Warm air hits cooler air, and it forms a rotating tunnel that can touch land. The excessive winds can lift cars into the air, uproot trees, and send homes crashing to the ground. The winds can reach more than 250 miles per hour, and become deadly if they pick up debris. While tornadoes can occur anywhere, certain parts of the United States experience them more frequently. The Midwest is known for frequent and deadly tornadoes.

You can protect your home against the tornado winds by fortifying doors and walls, adding shutters to the outside of windows, and ensure that the trees on your property are healthy. A healthy tree is more likely to stay rooted and not have loose branches that turn into "flying missiles". During the tornado, make sure that all of your windows are closed and retreat to the basement. As with earthquakes, you should drop, cover, and hold on. Get underneath a heavy piece of furniture like a table or desk to protect yourself from falling debris. Keep water, food, and a first aid kit in the basement in case of a serious storm.

Hailstorms

Hailstorms aren't usually considered a natural disaster. However, they can be extremely destructive.

Hailstorms cause an estimated one billion dollars worth of damage to property every year. Hail forms during a storm when drops of rain are frozen in the upper atmosphere. Normally, the hail is small and causes little to no damage. However, hail can become as big as softballs or larger. When this happens, the hail can break windows, damage cars, and injure people.

To protect your family and home against hail damage, keep up on maintenance of your house. A sturdy roof will not be as susceptible to damage. During a hailstorm, make sure your car is in a garage and all your children and pets are in the house. If the hail is extremely large, cover the windows with curtains or blankets if you can, or at least stay away from any windows. If hail breaks the glass in a window, the shattered pieces could be launched inwards.

Fortifying Your Home and Prepping It Against Natural Disasters

When most people think of hunkering down for disaster, they think of having emergency supplies, like water, food, first aid kits, and blankets. But your first concern should be your shelter. You need to make sure that your home is prepped and "hunker-ready" BEFORE disaster strikes. And don't underestimate the emotional value of preparing your home. Living through a tornado, earthquake, wildfire or flood is one of the most traumatic experiences a person can have. Add to this the heartbreak of seeing your home and belongings damaged or even destroyed, and it's no wonder people are looking for any way to prepare for the unexpected. While home insurance protection is there to pick up the pieces when unavoidable catastrophes happen, fortifying your home against a natural disaster is a way of managing the overall damage that can occur. For all of these recommendations, check with your local contractor's licensing board or use an internet search engine to find contractors that can help inspect and fortify your home.

Here are some of the primary areas to focus on to make sure your shelter is prepped and ready.

Fortified Home Construction

When a natural disaster impacts an area or region, the social and financial costs of rebuilding homes and communities can be enormous. For these reasons, a nonprofit organization known as the Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) has developed sets of building codes designed to help homeowners fortify their homes against natural disasters. In most cities and counties, building code regulations provide a baseline guide for home and commercial buildings. Building a home to code ensures the basic overall structure is solid and sound. The IBHS has developed enhanced code sets known as Code Plus that go over and above what the local building codes require. In effect, these code sets are designed to

strengthen the areas in a home's construction most vulnerable to the effects of a natural disaster.

Roofing

In areas where tornadoes or hurricanes are likely, fortifying a home's roof can go a long way towards reducing overall damage to the home. Even in cases where a roof remains intact after a catastrophe, a weakened roof covering opens up the possibility of water entry, which can damage and weaken a home's structure. Ways to fortify a roof include ensuring the framing and covering can withstand the effects of high force winds, rain and hail. This means the ends of the roof or gable framing should be braced back towards the interior portion of the roof to prevent winds from getting underneath. The roof deck portion that attaches to the frame and sits underneath the shingles should be at least 19/32 inches thick and firmly attached to the frame. Using thick, quality grade shingle covering is also important. Placing a secondary water barrier or seal on top of the roof deck provides yet another layer of protection against potential water damage. This barrier is designed to remain intact in instances where storms blow shingles off the roof. For a full seal effect, it's also important to seal off the deck joints where the frame attaches to the deck. The IBHS recommends using a self-adhering polymer modified bitumen-roofing tape for deck joint seals.

Load Path

A big part of your home's design has to do with how weight loads are distributed throughout the home's structure. The connections or bracings between the roof and the walls and different floors are designed to evenly distribute weight from the top-down. When done right, your home's framework and structure remains solid and intact. Load paths run from the rooftop to the lowest levels of the home. Fortifying your home's load path involves ensuring the structures that make up the path are properly constructed. The roof's connection to the walls consists of strapping hardware - also known as hurricane straps - that joins rafters and trusses to underlying support walls. A solid support wall will be made of concrete block with vertical reinforcements or ties and horizontal beam reinforcements at the top of each wall section. Ensuring a solid connection between your home's structure

and its foundation requires wall bracings at four foot intervals between foundation and flooring and also where corners and wall openings exist. For exterior structures like carports and porches, anchor connections help to ensure these structures stay intact and connected to the main building.

Windows & Doors

Local building codes require all windows and doors to meet certain impact and pressure resistance standards. Most code regulations equip home structures to withstand winds of 90 miles per hour, which is about the force of a weak tornado. Fortifying windows and doors against extreme disaster conditions involves reinforcing window designs and strengthening doorways. Window reinforcements can be as simple as applying solar/ safety film across glass surfaces. This prevents glass from blowing inside the house and injuring you or a family member. You can also replace existing window sets with impact-resistant glass or double-pane glass windows. Adding on permanent storm shutters can also help to reinforce vulnerable window openings. Reinforcing doorways involves strengthening the connectors and bracings that hold a door in place. Doorways with three hinges as opposed to two provide a stronger connection to walls. Replacing deadbolt mechanisms with bolts that span at least one inch in length will provide a stronger brace between the door's free-side and the wall.

Home Equipment

In addition to fortifying your home, there are a number of essential home equipment items you might want to have on hand during and after the natural disaster.

Generator

A home generator can help supply your home with power should you lose electricity. It will allow you to keep such essentials as heaters, air conditioners, lights, refrigerators, and freezers running during a power outage. There are two basic types of home generators.

Permanent, fixed generators, called standby generators, are designed to be installed permanently at your home. They are connected to the house wiring and are immediately ready to use when needed. Some even automatically start when the power drops, and stop when the power resumes. This type of generator is expensive and should be installed by a licensed electrician, which adds to the expense. But they are generally more powerful and easier to use than our second type of generator, the portable generator. Portable generators are more economical, and can be stored away. When they are needed, you'll have to roll it out of storage and fill with fuel. Then you'll have to run extension cords from the generator to the areas of your home that need power. Since portable generators generate far less power than standby generators, you will need to selectively choose what appliances to run or not run. You will also have to periodically fill it with fuel to keep it running.

Heater

You may also want to consider a space heater, especially if you live in a cold climate. An electric space heater is easy to operate, but it will need to be run from your backup generator if there is a power outage. Kerosene heaters are handy if you don't have a generator. Kerosene has a long shelf life, but be sure to store it safely in approved containers away from sunlight. And make sure you use the heater in a well-ventilated area, and don't leave it unattended. You can also use portable propane heaters in smaller areas. Once again, ventilation is important. And make sure that all the components of your heater such as the nozzles and hoses are compatible and seal tightly. No matter what type of heater you use, follow all the safety precautions that come with the instructions for the heater.

Other Tools

Depending on where you live, and on the type of disaster, you may also want to keep on hand tools such as chainsaws and shovels. Chainsaws are handy to help cut up fallen trees from your yard after a storm has passed. And shovels are handy to dig temporary drainage ditches to channel water away from your homes foundation or basement before a storm hits.

The Myth of the 72-Hour Emergency Kit

Most officials and emergency organizations recommend that people put together "72-hour" emergency kits. These kits consist of 72 hours worth of food, water, and emergency supplies for your family. The theory is that during a disaster, it may take up to three days for "help" to arrive for you. This help might be in the form of government-sponsored relief, such as the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Or it might be from the Red Cross or other non-government disaster relief efforts. Or it might just be restoration of normal utilities such as water and electricity after a disaster. However, survival prepping sees a 72-hour kit as woefully inadequate for three reasons. One is that it can take much longer for disaster recovery to take place. Just look at the slow response to Hurricane Katrina a few years back. And second of all, in some situations, even with a quick response, disaster relief might be overwhelmed, and not able to respond to everyone's needs. The third reason is that there might be some disasters of the "non-natural" kind where help won't be coming for a long time, such as economic collapse, martial law, or governmental collapse. Although we're focused here primarily on natural disasters, we can't forget that these are possible as well.

So all in all, a 72-hour kit just isn't adequate for decent survival prepping. At a minimum, your emergency kit should include 10 days of food, water, and emergency supplies. I recommend that as a minimum. A 30 days supply would be better, 90 days even better. Six months would be better still. And up to a year's worth of supplies would be ideal. Of course, this depends on your financial resources and the storage space you have in your home. But what I often find when talking with new preppers is that the prospect of gathering a year's worth of supplies seems overwhelming. It's usually a mental barrier that prevents people from being adequately prepped. So for this book, we're going to focus on helping you put together a 10 day supply of emergency supplies. And we're doing that for two reasons. First, the 10-day supply is a good place to start. It is easy to put together that amount of food and emergency supplies without getting overwhelmed by all the details.

And secondly, it's far better than a mere 72-hour kit, and it will get you through many natural disasters without having to rely on immediate relief. So look at this 10-day kit as your first step. Once you see how easy it is to put together, it will give you the confidence to grow it into a larger kit. Then you can set a new goal, say a 30-day kit. Just add more food, water, and supplies until you reach the 30-day level. Then you can set the next goal, a 90-day kit. Keep working your way up, step-by-step, and before you know it, you'll be fully prepped. But this all starts with that first step. Are you ready? Let's get started on your 10-day kit with the most important parts - water and food.

Water: Storage, Alternate Sources, and Purification

During an emergency, after shelter, water is one of the most important considerations. You can survive days without food, but you will not survive as long without water.

How to Store Water For An Emergency

Storing water requires glass containers or food-grade plastic. These containers can be purchased from outdoor and hardware stores and come in sizes of one, three or five gallons. If you choose plastic containers, make sure that these containers are marked "BPA-Free." Bisphenol A (BPA) is an industrial chemical that can leach from the plastic into the water during storage. So look for BPA-free containers for long term storage.

In addition to specialized containers, if you already have a container that has previously held water or food, it will be acceptable for storing water. For example, two-liter soda bottles and milk jugs would be acceptable for water storage. Stainless steel can also be used to store water if the water has not been treated with chlorine. The chlorine will corrode the steel. For storing large amounts of water for the family, some people use 55 gallon drums for water storage. These drums aren't as large as they might sound. Usually they are only three feet tall and two feet in diameter. When they are empty, they weigh only about 25 pounds. However, once they are full of water, they will be heavy. You may have some difficulty moving them around. But if you have space for them, 55 gallon drums are ideal for hunkering down.

You can also choose food-grade, High Density PolyEthylene (HDPE) containers. Once again, look for BPA-free containers. The containers should be thoroughly cleaned with hot water and soap. The containers should also be rinsed with a solution containing one tablespoon of chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

Stainless steel should be placed in boiling water for 10 minutes. All stored water should be clearly marked as drinking water. The date it was stored should also be marked. The water should be stored in a dry and cool place that is not near sunlight or other forms of heat. Water should also be stored away from pesticides, kerosene and gasoline. Water stored in this capacity should be changed every six months to 12 months. It is also a good idea to freeze a gallon of water in the freezer to keep perishables cold until power is restored. When filling a water jug to freeze, don't fill it all the way, and leave some space for the water to expand or the jug will crack.

How Much Water to Store

There are differing opinions on how much water to store. The minimum recommendation is one gallon of water per person per day. But that's the bare minimum for drinking water for relatively healthy adults in a mild climate. Water storage amounts may vary based upon the person's physical condition, diet and climate. Children, sick people, and nursing mothers will require more water. If you live in the desert, or in warmer or drier climates, you should double the amount per day per person. An additional gallon or so of water per person may also be required per day for bathing, washing dishes and hygiene. To be fully prepped, we suggest three gallons of water per day per person. So a family of four should store about 12 gallons of water per day. If you use two 55-gallon drums, that would be about a 10-day supply for the family.

How to Find Alternate Water Sources During an Emergency

In an emergency, there are several alternate water sources if commercial water is not available. Here are a few suggestions if you have not stored enough water to prepare for the natural disaster.

Drain Available Water From the Public Water Supply

Drain water from the plumbing system if the public water supply is still safe. A typical water heater holds 30 to 60 gallons of water and can be beneficial in an emergency. Before draining, the electricity or gas should be turned off. Allow the water heater to cool before draining the water to prevent scalding. The first few gallons may contain rust or sediment. Drain the first few gallons and discard the

water. When the cleaner water is obtained, add five to seven drops of chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Let the water sit for 30 minutes before consumption.

Outdoor Water Sources

Streams, lakes, rivers, natural springs and ponds can be used if the water is first treated (see below). Water with an odor or a dark color should be avoided. Flood water should not be consumed. Saltwater can be consumed if the water is distilled first (see below).

Swimming Pools.

Pools are a source of backup water. To use pool water as an alternate source, the maintenance level should be between three and five parts per million of free chlorine. Boil the water to five parts per million before drinking the water. Use the chlorine test kit that you use with your pool to test the boiled water. Keep the pool covered until the water is needed.

How to Purify Questionable Water

If you are uncertain if the water you have is safe to drink, there are a number of ways to purify it.

Boil and Chlorinate the Water

Purification of water is possible with boiling and chlorination. Boiling times will vary based upon the altitude. In general though, a rolling boil for five to ten minutes is safe at sea level. Longer times may be required at higher altitudes. After boiling, let the water cool first. Then add five to seven drops, which is approximately one-eighth teaspoon, of chlorine bleach to each gallon of water. Shake the solution and store in a dry and cool place for at least 30 minutes. If the water smells of chlorine, it will be safe to consume. The bleach used should be standard household bleach with 5.25 percent hypochlorite. Avoid bleaches with scents as they may not be safe to consume.

Filter and Chlorinate the Water.

Purchase a filter at a sporting goods store that will remove parasites. Since filters will not eliminate all bacteria and viruses, add five to seven drops of chlorine bleach to each gallon of filtered water and wait 30 minutes before consumption.

Distill the Water

Distillation is the process of boiling water and then capturing the vapor when it condenses back to water. The vapor will be free of impurities and salt. A distilling flask, purchased from camping and outdoor stores, along with a heat source such as a camp stove, can make distilling much easier. Just follow the instructions that come with the flask. If you don't have a distilling flask, you can still perform the distillation process, although it is a bit more difficult and time-consuming. You will need a pot with a lid, a cup, and some string or rope to tie the cup to the lid. Place the lid on top of the cup, and tie it to the lid and handle. The cup needs to be held securely in place, with a little space between the top of the cup and the lid. You may need to have a family member hold the lid and cup as you tie it on. The cup should be upright when the lid is placed back on the pot. Fill the pot half way with water, and set it to boil. Place the lid on the pot, so that the cup is suspended above the water. As the water boils, the steam will hit the lid, condense into water, and will drop into the cup. Use the water from the cup. Discard any water left in the pot, as it will contain the impurities left behind.

Food: Stocking Your Larder to Survive

With a little time and commitment, you can stock up your food pantry or basement with a variety of healthy and nutritious foods that will help to sustain your family during a natural disaster and the aftermath of one. If you are a busy person who works and cares for your family, you may think you don't have enough time on your hands to create and store foods. However, by setting aside just one day each month for preparations, you can take positive steps to provide for your family during unexpected crisis events.

Stocking Your Larder

Your survival "larder" is the place where you'll keep your family's emergency food. This larder should be in the place that will most likely survive a natural disaster. If you have a basement, that may be the best place for you to put your larder. If you don't have a basement, a location along an interior wall near the inside of the house is probably the best bet. You may be wondering if having an emergency larder is necessary. After all, you are in your home. Can't you just put your emergency food in your kitchen with the rest of your food? Well, maybe. But there might be cases where part of your home becomes unusable during a natural disaster. You might not be able to get access to your kitchen, while the rest of your house is useable. Actually, it might be good to have two or three emergency larders spread around your home just in case. But more importantly, having your emergency food in separate larders allows you to inspect it periodically to check the dates on the food to make sure it is still good.

If you are putting all of your emergency supplies together in one location such as a basement, it is important that you have separate shelving units for cleaning and personal items to keep them away from the food items you will store. Take care to keep all chemical cleaning products away from food items to ensure toxins are not spilled into the food area. As for what food to stock your larder with, any foods that have a long shelf life and don't require refrigeration are good candidates.

Most canned goods in your local grocery store fit this bill. Canned foods with high-liquid ratios will also reduce the need for drinking water. Canned meats, soups, chili, beans, and stews can form the basis of your emergency meals. These items are usually fully cooked, so if you don't have any way to heat these items, you can consume them directly from the can. Just make sure you have a can-opener stored with your emergency supplies. You can also add items like canned fruits and vegetables to your storage area for additional nutrients and variety. In addition, soup, fruit juices, and drinks that come in aseptic, "juice box" style packaging often have long shelf lives as well. You can also find "canned" foods (that is, food preserved in an air-tight glass jar) such as fruits and pickled vegetables. However, glass jars are breakable, so it would be best to stick with items in metal cans.

Beyond canned and aseptic items, many camping and outdoor stores offer a wide selection of MRE ("meals ready to eat") packages, including some that are self-heating. Self-heating packages are convenient in an emergency, especially when it isn't safe to use your camp stove or to light a fire. You'll also find dehydrated camping meals that usually require adding water and some heating.

[Additional Food Suggestions](#)

Peanut butter or other nut butters are a great item to store in your emergency storage room. Peanut butter provides healthy fats and protein and will provide adequate amounts of nutrition when paired with fruit or canned vegetables. Snack bars made of granola, protein or fruit work well, as do dry cereals or granola that can be eaten without preparation. Dried fruit that is similar to the fresh fruit favorites your family enjoys, as well as shelled nuts can be good sources of nutrition. Since bread usually has a poor shelf life, crackers can substitute for bread and will last longer. In addition, canned, pasteurized milk can be a substitute for fresh milk. You may also want to include vitamins and other dietary supplements your family needs.

And don't forget infant foods, as well as comfort foods such as candy and other favorites. During an emergency, you'd be surprised how welcome a comfort food is to help keep your spirits up.

Cooking and Eating During an Emergency

One of the best ways to be prepared for a natural disaster is to ensure you have all the necessary cooking items stored in your emergency storage room. A small charcoal grill will allow you to cook outside the home if electricity is not available. Be sure to stock up on several bags of charcoal, lighter fluid, spatulas and grill cleaner. It is also a smart idea to store away a large supply of paper towels and paper plates and utensils.

If water is out and electricity is out as well, disposable items are going to be a lifesaver during emergency situations. If you use a charcoal grill, it is imperative you only use it outside. As an alternative, you can also get a small propane stove for indoor use. Make sure to have backup propane cylinders. Because you never know in advance if you will have electricity available, you will want to store a hot plate and a small pot or two in your storage room.

Cooking on a hot plate will allow you to heat the food so it is more appetizing; however, canned meats, vegetables and fruits do not need to be heated in order to provide sustenance. As you are building up the items in your storage room for emergency situations, remember to make a check list and add on items that will help to make your cooking and food preparation go more smoothly. These items will include utensils, plastic drinking cups, trash bags, basic dish soap, hand soap, hand sanitizer, and can openers.

Hygiene: The Biggest Threat to Your Hunkering Down Health and Safety

When preparing for a disaster, many people think about things like stockpiling food and batteries. However, they do not think about things like hygiene and sanitation.

Realistically, the threats posed by poor hygiene and sanitation are more dire than the threats posed by starvation, and if you find yourself in a disaster situation, it is essential that you know how to prevent infection and the spread of disease. Make sure that you are acquainted with these important tips to keep yourself and your family safe.

Get Rid of Contaminated Food

The food that you eat during an emergency situation must be uncontaminated, as food poisoning can pose a serious risk. If your food has come in contact with storm water or flood water, throw it out. Similarly, throw out any perishable food if it has been in your refrigerator for longer than four hours after the power has gone out. The phrase to always keep in mind is "When in doubt, throw it out." Use your best judgment. If the food has a strange color, texture or odor, throw it away.

Boil Your Water

Water can carry many diseases if it is not treated. We covered how to purify water earlier in this book, but just a reminder: In most cases, water can be rendered harmless and drinkable through bringing it to a boil before drinking it. Other methods of treating water to render it drinkable include filtering it or adding a disinfectant such as chlorine to it. It is important to remember that boiling water does not work for all situations. If the water has been contaminated by toxic chemicals or by gasoline or oil, do not drink it.

Human Waste

Human waste is a serious issue during an emergency. The most important priority is to find a way to dispose of it that does not create a situation where food or food preparation surfaces are affected.

For example, in situations where the water is not running, a garbage bag can be slid over the toilet bowl, creating a reservoir for the waste that can be sealed when it is not in use and disposed of later on.

Chemicals like quicklime will neutralize the waste and keep the odor down. Similarly, you can purchase a "honey bucket" - a specially designed bucket for capturing and storing human waste. A bucket of this sort is easily sealed and neutralized with baking soda. Be smart about your waste; if you have a latrine or a portable toilet on hand, locate it at least 100 feet away from your food prep areas.

Wash Your Hands

In an emergency situation, germs can spread very quickly through skin to skin contact. To minimize the effect of germs, keep your hands clean by washing them with clean water and soap. Most people wash their hands thoughtlessly, but during an emergency, you'll want to take extra care. Rub a wet lather of soap between your hands for at least 20 seconds, taking care to clean under your fingernails and on the backs of your hands, and then rinse them off completely. This can help prevent the spread of illness. If clean water is scarce, use alcohol-based wipes to keep your hands free and clear of germs and disease.

Wound Care

Some small wounds can be taken care of at home during an emergency situation. We'll discuss first aid in more detail in the next chapter, but here are the basics.

Make sure that the wound is cleaned with clean water, and then apply a small amount of antibacterial cream before covering it with a bandage.

Covering a wound will keep it from getting infected as it heals. Rinse the wound out with soap and water at least once a day to further prevent the chances of infection. Signs that more serious care is needed include swelling, seeping or redness. If a wound feels warm to the touch, it is also a sign that you may need further medical attention. Always handle a wound with clean hands.

Infant Care

Infants and very young children are often the most vulnerable people during an emergency situation. If you have a child who is breastfeeding, he or she should continue to breastfeed if at all possible.

If the child in question is on a formula solution that requires water, make sure that you only prepare the formula with clean water. Make sure that all of the infant's bottles and feeding equipment are sanitized with hot water after every use.

Canned Food Concerns

Many people stockpile canned foods for emergencies, but it is also important to remember that canned foods can also be contaminated. For example, if the can is bulging, it should be thrown away. The bulging is a sign that there is a buildup of gas inside the can and the contents have been rendered inedible.

Similarly, if the can has been sitting in contaminated water of any sort, it needs to be disinfected. Check the label to see what is in the can and its expiration date. Remove the label, then dip the can into a vat that contains a mixture of five gallons of water and one cup of bleach. Rinse the can off, and then use a permanent marker to re-label it, marking down the contents of the can and the expiration date.

Food Contact Surfaces

A food contact surface is any surface that is used in food preparation. In most cases, this means cutting boards and counter tops. Any surface that you suspect has been contaminated should be washed with soap and decontaminated water and then rinsed. After that, it can be sanitized with a solution made from about 1 teaspoon of bleach and a gallon of clean water. Allow the surface to air dry for the best results.

Some Things Cannot Be Made Safe

During a disaster, particularly one that involves water, there will be some things that cannot be kept safe. For example, wooden cutting boards and wooden cooking utensils should likely be tossed. Wood is porous and bacteria can grow in very small cracks where scrubbing cannot reach. On top of that, you should also throw out any pacifiers or bottle nipples that have come into contact with contaminated water. If you are not sure if something is contaminated or not, remember that it is always better to be safe than sorry. During an emergency, make sure that you are completely prepared to deal with hygiene issues and sanitation issues. This can make a huge amount of difference in a stressful time.

Your First Aid Kit: When Medical Help Isn't Available

Being prepared for a natural disaster is a must, especially if you live in areas that are prone to such events. A first aid kit is a necessity for those who want to be prepared during a natural disaster. The kit needs to be well marked and fully-stocked at all times.

Assembling Your First-Aid Kit

The most important item in your first aid kit? A booklet. Unless you have had some sort of first aid training, it's always a good idea to have a booklet that lists different first aid techniques. Even if you have had minimal training, having something to refer to in times of high stress can be comforting. Go to your local bookstore to find one, or search your online bookstore for "first aid booklet".

Besides a first aid booklet, other items you need to include are:

- Sterile gauze, both 2x2 and 4x4 sizes
- Medical tape – either paper, silk or plastic
- Adhesive bandages in multiple sizes
- Several rolls of three or four inch self-adherent elastic wrap
- Compression wraps – at least two four inch wraps
- Several antiseptic wipes
- Antibacterial liquid soap
- Triple antibiotic ointment – preferably with lidocaine
- One bottle of peroxide
- A tube of anti-itch cream

- One bottle of chewable aspirin tablets, commonly referred to as baby aspirin
- Tweezers
- Bandage scissors
- A few large safety pins
- Medical grade cold compresses
- Calamine lotion
- Cotton balls
- One bottle of alcohol or a box of alcohol wipes
- Thermometer
- Latex gloves – you can use polyurethane or vinyl if you have a latex allergy
- Small flashlight with batteries
- Small box of diphenhydramine/ antihistamine allergy tablets
- Tongue depressors
- Several bottles of water
- Over-the-counter NSAID medications (ibuprofen) and other pain relievers

Make sure to check your first aid kit on a regular basis, and replace items that have been used or are out of date. All of these items can be found at your local pharmacy, although some products may be behind the counter. If you are unable to find what you need, ask the pharmacist.

First Aid Skills and Techniques

There are a number of different ailments that can occur at any time, even during a natural disaster. Some of the most common ailments will be discussed as well as ways to treat them using items from your newly stocked first aid kit.

Please also check your first aid booklet for additional treatment options for these situations.

Anaphylaxis

This is the most severe form of allergic reaction. People who suffer from anaphylaxis can quickly go from being completely fine one minute to not breathing the next.

These people will need professional medical assistance immediately. However, there are a few things you can do to assist the person suffering from anaphylaxis. First, call for emergency assistance, if phone lines are open and someone hasn't already done so.

As the person with anaphylaxis often knows they have life-threatening allergies, he or she sometimes will carry an epinephrine autoinjector, also known as an "epipen".

Ask the person if he or she has one of these. If the person is unconscious, search through his or her pockets and see if you can find one. If a member of your family has allergies, make sure you store additional epipens in your first aid kit. Administer the injection immediately, if the person has it. Assist the person to a lying position to avoid injury if he or she loses consciousness.

Cover the person with a light blanket or sweatshirt, if possible. If the person has tight clothing around the neck, loosen the clothing. Do not give him or her anything to drink! If the person stops breathing, begin CPR and continue with it until someone more qualified arrives.

Bruises

Bruises can occur virtually anywhere on the body, especially when a person is hit by debris in a natural disaster.

Bruises occur because of surface blood vessels being broken, allowing blood to flow into the different layers of skin.

Small bruises may not need treatment, but larger bruises, especially those where the point of impact is swollen, will need cold compresses applied several times a day. Over-the-counter NSAID medications like ibuprofen will help with pain and inflammation of the bruised area.

Abrasions

An abrasion is a cut on the surface of the skin. These are not very deep, and normally stop bleeding very quickly. Abrasions can be taken care of very quickly with an antiseptic wipe, adhesive bandages, and antibiotic ointment. Make sure you apply multi-use antibiotic ointment to the fresh adhesive bandage, rather than directly on the abrasion. This way you are not touching the tip of the tube with contaminated flesh or blood.

Lacerations

A laceration is a cut that's deeper than an abrasion, often requiring sutures or stitches. In an emergency situation when medical assistance is not readily available, there are several steps you can take to slow the bleeding and prevent infection.

Wipe the area with an antiseptic wipe or pour hydrogen peroxide over the wound and wipe clean with sterile 4x4 gauze. Apply pressure to the laceration to slow the bleeding.

If necessary, cover the wound with several pieces of sterile gauze and wrap tightly with self-adherent elastic wrap from your kit. If it's going to be a long time before medical treatment can be sought, it's a good idea to remove the pressure once in a while, especially if it's wrapped so tightly that you lose feeling in the area below the laceration.

Dislocations and Fractures

When an arm becomes dislocated, one shoulder will hang lower than the other. It's also possible to dislocate hips, thumbs and elbows. If a dislocation is suspected, do not attempt to correct the problem on your own.

Apply a cold compress to the area and immobilize it immediately. If the shoulder or elbow is suspected, wrap the affected limb tightly to the body with a compression wrap. Ibuprofen can help to minimize pain and swelling associated with this condition as well.

Fractures are broken bones. These injuries will also require immobilization. Use a tongue depressor and self-adherent elastic wrap or tape to immobilize fingers and wrists. When arms or legs are involved, you can use a baseball bat, broom or mop handle or anything else that's straight and long enough to completely prevent the affected limb from moving. Ibuprofen can also be used to decrease pain and swelling.

Puncture Wounds

If a person is impaled with an object, use a compression wrap to prevent the object from moving while it's inside the body. DO NOT remove the object, regardless of whether the person is conscious or unconscious.

CPR

It's always a good idea to have every member of the family become familiar with basic CPR skills. These classes are normally offered at many different locations, including community college campuses, local recreation centers, Red Cross locations, and even in some churches and other organizations. Practice CPR as a family at least once a month, so it's familiar to everyone, just in case of an emergency.

Communications: Improving Your Situational Awareness

Proper communication is essential in surviving any disaster. It is important to being aware of how your situation is developing. It is also essential to be able to send messages and signals to get help and supplies. The following is the usual gear needed for staying in touch and communicating during natural disasters.

Landline Phones

A landline phone is one of the easiest communication devices to use during emergencies. Any member of the family who knows how to make a phone call can easily dial emergency numbers to inquire about the current nature and severity of the situation. Home phones are also accessible and ready for use at any time. You can contact neighbors, friends, and family to stay updated or to ask for help. However, natural disasters can often damage phone lines and leave you with a landline phone that doesn't work.

They can also cause damage to phone company offices, and this could cut off landline phone service. And finally, the sheer amount of people using the phone system during a disaster can prevent making calls. To make sure you can fully use your landline, we recommend that you have at least one corded, non-electric phone at home to use. The modern cordless phones may not charge properly during a power outage.

Mobile Phones

Almost everyone owns a cell phone these days. They are accessible and easy to use. They come in handy during natural disasters because they don't require physical phone lines. You also have the advantage of having emergency numbers stored in your cell phone. Being stuck in difficult situations can be much easier with a handy

communication device. Although a cell phone is a good way of communicating with other people, it also has its own disadvantages.

Network providers in your area may have also been damaged by the disaster. This often causes phone service and signals to be irregular and even cut off. Phone networks may also experience congestion because a lot of people will use their mobile phones to communicate or get help. This will make it difficult for you to get through on the line or send text messages.

A cell phone's battery also lasts for only a few hours at the most. These phones need constant recharging. Because most natural disasters cause power outages, you will not be able to charge your phone. This will be an inconvenience if a mobile phone is the only communication device you have during an extended power outage. However, you can be prepared by having an external or extra battery that is fully charged and ready for use. You might also want to have on hand a solar cell phone charger. Those who want to conserve battery power may simply turn their phones off, but incoming calls will not be received. To increase the chances that you will have a signal, an alternative is a satellite phone. Satellite phones are very similar to cell phones, and just as easy to operate. While more expensive than standard cell phones, satellite phone service tends to be less affected by natural disasters than cell phones.

Broadcast Radio

Radios are a traditional way of sending messages to listeners during disasters. You can always stay updated about the hazards and safety measures with these devices. Radio announcers can use simple radio communications systems to stay on air. Radios are affordable and accessible.

They can be purchased in local shops at practical prices depending on the model. Radios can either use electricity or batteries. Electrically-powered radios are not practical during natural disasters as you will have power outages most of the time. This is where battery-powered radios come in handy. You can easily change the batteries once your radio runs out of power. However, you will have to prepare extra batteries for this device. You also have to refresh your stock of batteries as they have expiration dates. Proper storage is also needed for these batteries because they easily deteriorate with heat and moisture.

Another efficient option is to purchase solar-powered radios. These radios don't require the use of electricity or batteries. You can easily charge them with sunlight. The downside to using solar radios is that they do not work at night. You can also find hand-cranked transistor radios that you can power through winding yourself. In addition to the standard transistor radio, you may also want to consider having an NOAA Weather Alert Radio. This radio picks up broadcast directly from the U.S. National Weather Service office. This office broadcasts around the clock, giving you the latest weather information for your area.

Broadcast Television

Televisions are also a good way of getting information. You can keep an eye on the progress and safety tips from private and public offices. Television stations are usually updated during natural disasters. They contribute to the fast distribution of public knowledge. They usually work simultaneously with radio stations to inform the public about current news. Although televisions provide viewers with current information about events, they are not very efficient during natural disasters. Most television sets need electricity to work, and they will be useless during outages. You need to have a backup generator if you prefer to watch the news on television.

Two-Meter Amateur Band Ham Radio

One common helpful device for any kind of natural disaster is a two-meter amateur band ham radio. This allows amateur radio operators to stay in touch in difficult places or situations with the use of a repeater. This radio set consists of a transmitter and a receiver that can contact other radio operators from 20 to 50 miles away depending on if there are any working repeaters in the area. These ham radios are also built for heavy-duty use. You can communicate with other radio operators using the same frequency. With a ham radio, you can stay in touch with people in a wide area. Although ham radios are often seen in survival kits, they require certain knowledge and expertise for you to successfully operate them. In the U.S., you will also need a ham radio license issued by the FCC (Federal Communications Commission). This licensing requires study plus a written exam. You also need to prepare spare batteries for these radios or have a backup generator ready for the emergency.

Citizens Band Radio

Having a citizens band radio, known as CB radio, can also be helpful in an emergency. CB radio has a much shorter range than ham radio, generally between one to five miles. And there are only forty authorized channels that are shared among all CB radio users. But there are no licensing requirements to operate a CB radio within the United States. In addition, it's much easier to learn and operate a CB radio than a ham radio. Once again, power is a consideration, so spare batteries or a backup generator may be necessary.

Walkie-Talkies

Walkie-talkies are hand-held, two-way radios. They are much easier to use than ham or CB radios, but they have very limited ranges, and are used for person-to-person communications. If you have neighbors or relatives that live physically close to you, these devices can help you maintain contact during an emergency. There are two types of walkie-talkies in the United States. FRS (Family Radio Service) walkie-talkies have a limited range.

Depending on obstructions, it may be anywhere from 1/3 mile (half a kilometer) to 1 mile (or one and a half kilometers). So these really are best suited for communicating with neighbors. On the positive side though, FRS walkie-talkies do not require licensing through the government, and are relatively inexpensive. GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service) walkie-talkies have a slightly greater range, up to two miles or three kilometers depending on obstructions. You can also add greater range of up to five miles or eight kilometers with a higher antenna. In the U.S. though, GMRS walkie-talkies require a license from the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). The licensing procedure is simple though, and does not require an examination or any specialized knowledge. Once again, make sure you have spare power sources to keep your walkie-talkies working during an emergency.

Children: Removing the Fear of Hunkering Down

Infants

If you have infants, make sure you include all the normal daily care items in your emergency supplies. This includes diapers, baby wipes, infant formulas, and any medicine they may be taking. Make sure you include enough water for the formulas as well as for bathing your child.

Toddlers and School Age Children

If you have small children, you want to involve them in your preparedness planning as much as possible for three reasons. First of all, you want to make sure they are physically safe. Your children need to know what to do during an emergency to protect themselves.

The second reason is that by involving them with the preparation plans, it helps ease their fears about emergency situations and builds their self-confidence. And the third reason, and perhaps the most important, it increases the bond you have with your children, and helps them build their trust in you. The family that prepares together not only stays safe together, but creates a common tie that will help improve family relationships.

Discuss Possible Emergencies with the Family

When you are making a plan for emergencies, you should involve the whole family. Start a family meeting and talk about the natural disasters that might occur in your local area. Ask for suggestions for plans that will keep the family safe during the disaster and after the emergency has passed. Involve your children with creating the emergency plan. By getting your children involved in the process, you will ensure they understand the appropriate actions based on the situation.

It also shows that parents value the opinions of children and are prepared to listen to suggestions, helping to build the teamwork that will be necessary in an emergency. The discussion should always consider age-appropriate information for your children. Focusing on the type of emergency and telling children the appropriate action will help keep your children safe. Focus the discussion on planning options and working around the situation at home. While you might not be able to get to a school, daycare or other location when children are out of the house, you should have a plan when they are at home. Suggest that older children help the younger family members if parents are not home, get hurt, or are not in the same room at the time of the emergency.

Emergency Supplies

In this book, we've covered most of the basics about what to include in your emergency supplies for the whole family. But beyond the basics, when children are very young, you should also keep toys, books, and other entertaining diversions with your emergency supplies. You'll also want to include favorite pillows, blankets, or clothing. During an emergency, these items can reduce the tension and worries of your children. Have your children decide what they would like to keep in the emergency supplies. This will help them feel more a part of the preparedness planning.

And as you gather the supplies for the family, show your children where the items are located and explain when to use the emergency supplies. Teach them how to use the basic emergency items that are appropriate for their age. This not only helps them be prepared, but it also provide a level of protection in case you become injured during the emergency.

Teach Children Emergency Numbers

While some natural disasters might knock out the power or prevent calls, your children should still understand the appropriate emergency numbers. You should teach your children to dial 9-1-1 from a young age and should provide a number to reach appropriate adults in case children become separated during the chaos of a natural disaster.

Practice with Your Children

The only way to ensure the family is fully prepared for the worst is practice. You should take time to practice different emergency situations and applying the plan to the situation.

For example, if you are planning for the possibility of tornadoes, then you should focus on moving the family into the basement or getting underground. Practice makes it easier to spot problems with the plan and discuss solutions at the next family meeting. If you are not practicing, then the possibility of something going wrong during a natural disaster is much higher.

If you have infant children, then it is doubly important to practice for different emergencies. Determining who will be responsible for getting the infant to safety will prevent a tragedy if a natural disaster strikes the area.

Get Your Children's School Involved

When you are planning for a natural disaster, you need to recognize that the family might not be at home during the event. Getting your children's school involved in disaster preparedness will help you determine the best solution when children are not at home.

Talk to their school about policies regarding local disasters. For example, if the area is prone to earthquakes, then you should ask about earthquake drills and getting in contact with children after the event. Finding out how their school handles disasters will help you determine the options available to help get children out of school after a disaster.

Test Children Regularly

After ensuring your children understand the emergency plans, you should test them on a regular basis. Ask children questions to determine if they remember the plan and test their knowledge about the location of emergency supplies.

Learn and Teach First Aid

While the plan and practice is important, you also want to learn first aid and teach children the basics in case injuries occur during a natural disaster. Children need to know where the first aid kit is located, the basics of cleaning cuts and the different types of bandages that are appropriate for the size of the cut. Earthquakes, hurricanes, hail storms, tornadoes and other natural disasters can result in injuries. By preparing for the possibility of an injury, you will help keep the whole family safe from tragedy.

Pets: Hunkering Down with Our Furry Family Members

Your pets will be hunkering down with you. So you need to consider your pet's needs when it comes to prepping for your family's safety and survival.

Create a Pet Emergency Kit

Much like the emergency supplies you are gathering for yourself and your children, it is important to have the essentials gathered to keep your pets safe and happy. Some items you will want to form into a pet emergency kit include:

Food and water

Perhaps the two most essential parts of any kit. Have at least the same amount of food and water for your pets as you do for yourself. Keep both in a safe, airtight container.

Medicine

If your pets take any medication, having several extra days worth of pills stored in a safe, airtight container is also a good idea.

Collar with ID

Though dogs and cats should always be wearing their collars with ID and rabies tags at all times, make it a priority to know where these items are for certain. Keep a copy of this information in the emergency kit as well.

Pet carrier

During a disaster, even if you are hunkering down rather than evacuating, have a pet carrier handy. You may wish to keep your pet safe at night and at other times by placing him or her in the carrier.

First aid kit

Natural disasters can lead to minor pet injuries, so having a first aid kit to treat these injuries can help expedite your pet's healing. Speak with your veterinarian to learn what supplies should be included with this kit. Usually, your kit should contain cotton bandage rolls, tape, scissors, flea and tick prevention, gloves, a pet first aid book, antibiotic ointment and an isopropyl alcohol and saline solution.

Sanitation

When appropriate, add litter, newspapers, trash bags and bleach to your prepper supplies. The first few items should handle taking care of your pet's waste, and the bleach serves as a disinfectant for water. For every gallon of water, thoroughly stirring in eight drops of bleach and letting it sit for half an hour is sufficient to purify water. Ensure this is standard bleach, not color-safe or scented bleach.

Familiar items

Finally, though it is not inherently required to survive a disaster, having favorite toys or treats can reduce the stress your pet experiences, ensuring he remains happy despite the disaster that occurs.

During and After a Disaster

If a natural disaster is about to occur, immediately bring your pets inside. The safest place for pets and humans alike is inside a home away from windows and other objects that can fly off a shelf and harm someone. This will also help prevent animals from running away, especially as many pets have natural instincts about sudden changes in weather that cause them to act irrationally. Separate dogs, cats, and small pets. Even if your pets all normally get along with each other, a natural disaster can cause your pets stress that promotes irrational behavior. Small pets, such as hamsters, are especially susceptible to harm if a larger pet starts to act irrationally. Keep a close eye on your pet's behavior. Disasters can greatly stress out a pet, and it's not uncommon for behavior to change as well. A normally quiet pet can become aggressive, so make sure to watch them closely while ensuring they have enough food and water. Keep your pets on a leash whenever going outside for a few days after a disaster. Even if your pets normally run free in the backyard or in a neighborhood, disasters can alter familiar smells and landmarks, which can confuse a pet.

The Single Most Important Thing You Can Do To Ensure Your Family's Safety

What is the most important thing you can do to improve your survival and safety should you ever need to hunker down? It is to PRACTICE your plan. Once you have your emergency supplies, get together with your family and pick a day, or at least a few hours, to do a trial run.

Just as I suggested in the introduction, take a day or an afternoon, and shut off all your utilities in your home. Shut off your water, gas, and electricity. Switch off the phones, the internet, and the cable. Stay in your house, right where you are, and have no contact with the outside world.

Use your emergency supplies, and go through the next few hours. Cook and eat a meal from your supplies. Practice going to the bathroom and bathing. Try out your communications equipment.

Go through your first aid booklet and check your first aid supplies. Spend time with your children and pets as you go through this trial run. After the trial is over, remember to replenish the supplies you used during the trial. These few hours will be the BEST investment you can make in your family's safety.

At the end of those few hours, you'll know what worked and what didn't, what you've forgotten, and what you need to know. And most importantly, this trial will give you confidence. You'll know with certainty that you and your family are prepared to hunker down during an emergency. You'll be amazed at the peace of mind this will give you, knowing you've prepared your family to be safe and secure, no matter what happens. I hope I've inspired you to start taking those first steps towards survival preparation.

Final Check: Your Hunker Down Supplies Checklist

Here is a final checklist you can use to put together your emergency supplies. It includes all the recommendations in this book, plus additional supplies to help you prep fully for hunkering down

Water

Store away from dangerous chemicals. Change out with fresh water every 6 to 12 months

- _ 3 gallons per person per day - store in containers and date each container
- _ Containers for water storage (55 gallon drums or other approved containers)
- _ Pans for boiling
- _ Camping water filter
- _ Camping distilling flask
- _ Chlorine bleach (unscented, 5.25 percent hypochlorite)

Food

Inspect every 6 to 12 months for expiration date

- _ Enough food for three meals per day per person, plus snacks
- _ Canned meats, soups, chili, beans, and stews
- _ Canned fruits and vegetables
- _ Aseptic packaged soup, fruit juices, and drinks
- _ MRE packaged meals, self-heating

- _ Dehydrated camping meals
- _ Peanut butter or other nut butters
- _ Snack bars made of granola, protein or fruit
- _ Dry cereals or granola
- _ Dried fruit
- _ Shelled nuts
- _ Crackers that can substitute for bread
- _ Canned, pasteurized milk
- _ Vitamins and other dietary supplements
- _ Infant foods and formulas
- _ Comfort foods
- _ Charcoal stove (for outdoor use) or indoor propane stove
- _ Charcoal
- _ Lighter fluid
- _ Propane for indoor propane stove
- _ Spatulas for grill
- _ Grill cleaner
- _ Hot plate (if electricity is available)
- _ Paper towels
- _ Sharp knife
- _ Eating utensils – plastic knives, forks and spoons, plates, paper cups
- _ Can opener
- _ Dish soap

Hygiene

- _ Garbage bags for everyday waste
- _ Garbage bags for human waste (placed over toilet bowl)
- _ "Honey Buckets" (special containers for storing waste)
- _ Quicklime to neutralize human waste
- _ Baking soda to neutralize human waste
- _ Specialized waste buckets
- _ Hand soap
- _ Alcohol based sanitary wipes
- _ Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- _ Toilet paper
- _ Facial tissues

First Aid Kit

- _ First aid booklet
- _ Sterile gauze, both 2x2 and 4x4 sizes
- _ Medical tape – either paper, silk or plastic
- _ Adhesive bandages in multiple sizes
- _ Several rolls of three or four inch self-adherent elastic wrap
- _ Compression wraps – at least two four inch wraps
- _ Several antiseptic wipes
- _ Antibacterial liquid soap
- _ Triple antibiotic ointment – preferably with lidocaine
- _ One bottle of hydrogen peroxide
- _ A tube of anti-itch cream

- _ One bottle of chewable aspirin tablets, commonly referred to as baby aspirin
- _ Tweezers
- _ Bandage scissors
- _ A few large safety pins
- _ Medical grade cold compresses
- _ Calamine lotion
- _ Cotton balls
- _ One bottle of alcohol or a box of alcohol wipes
- _ Thermometer
- _ Latex gloves – you can use polyurethane or vinyl if you have a latex allergy
- _ Small flashlight with batteries
- _ Small box of diphenhydramine/ antihistamine allergy tablets
- _ Tongue depressors
- _ Several bottles of water
- _ EpiPens for those with life-threatening allergies
- _ Over-the-counter NSAID medications (ibuprofen) and other pain relievers
- _ Up-to-date prescription medication for those with medical needs

Communications

- _ Corded, non-electric phone attached to landline
- _ Cell phone and/ or satellite phone
- _ External batteries or extra charged batteries for cell/ satellite phone (or solar cell phone charger)
- _ Battery powered transistor radio or an NOAA Weather Alert Radio
- _ Extra batteries for radio (or solar powered radio or hand-cranked radio)

- _ Ham radio, CB Radio, or walkie-talkies
- _ Back up batteries or backup generator for radios

Children

- _ Diapers
- _ Toys, books, and entertaining diversions
- _ Favorite pillows, blankets, clothing

Pets

- _ Food and water
- _ Medicine
- _ Collar with ID
- _ Pet carrier
- _ First aid kit: cotton bandage rolls, tape, scissors, flea and tick prevention, gloves, a pet first aid book, antibiotic ointment and an isopropyl alcohol and saline solution
- _ Sanitation: litter, newspapers, trash bags and bleach
- _ Toys
- _ Treats General

Equipment

- _ Flashlights – a battery-powered lantern is helpful for long power outages – extra batteries
- _ Whistle or personal siren – A loud noise can save lives in a debris field
- _ Infant supplies – Diapers, baby wipes, fresh formula, medicine
- _ Air filtering materials – masks or cotton t-shirt to use as a breathing filter

- _ Shelter-in-place – Plastic sheeting, scissors, and duct tape to cover doors and windows
- _ Tools to turn off utilities – Wrench or pliers

Clothing and Bedding

Climate is a major consideration in the selection of clothing for the emergency kit. Power outages can remove the ability to heat and cool the interior of the home. Clothing and bedding must be replenished to adjust for growing children and new family members.

Clothes for EACH person must be included in the kit.

- _ A coat or jacket
- _ Long pants or jeans
- _ A long-sleeved shirt
- _ Sturdy walking shoes
- _ Hat and gloves
- _ Sleeping bag or warm blanket

Specialty Supplies

Certain situations will dictate the need for special equipment that will be helpful. As you build an emergency kit for your family, consider which of the items on this list would be helpful.

- _ Rain gear in wet climates
- _ Cash and change for immediate needs, including gasoline
- _ Paper towels
- _ Pencil and paper
- _ Tent
- _ Fire extinguisher

- _ Matches in a sealed container
- _ Compass
- _ Signal flare
- _ Feminine hygiene supplies
- _ Disinfectant
- _ Personal hygiene items
- _ Spare eyeglasses and/ or contacts
- _ Medicine dropper
- _ Chlorine bleach - already mentioned under "Water" but a germ-killing cleaner for many uses.
- _ Books and other diversions for the adults
- _ Permanent marker (for labeling cans)

Home Equipment

- _ Generator (standby or portable)
- _ Gas for generators
- _ Extension cords for generators
- _ Heater - Electric, kerosene, or propane
- _ Extra fuel for heaters
- _ Chainsaw
- _ Shovels and tools
- _ Work gloves