

Food Storage Tips

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Reasons to Store Food

The only sure thing about the future is that there is no sure thing. Storing food for your family is one of the most prudent actions you can take. No one knows what can or will affect the functioning of society or food distribution. With stored food, you eliminate the worry.

The attention of the nation is focusing more intensely, each week, on families storing quantities of emergency food and water in their homes. Why?

Potential disruptions in the food supply can be caused by a number of factors: (Note the best estimates of the necessary time period for self-reliance.)

- Job Loss/Unemployment
- Economic Downturn
- Quarantines
- Erratic Weather - Droughts
- Earthquakes, Hurricanes and Floods
- Contamination of Food Supplies
- To Avoid Dependency on Commercial Food Storage Centers
- Transportation Disruptions

How Much to Store

Is a one-year supply of food enough? What about a two-year supply?

If people are fortunate enough to find storable food that they can trust, and if they are fortunate enough to get it stored before it disappears or becomes illegal, and if they're wise enough to get more than a 1-year supply, here's how that supply must be handled.

We must not touch any of that supply until every other alternative has been completely exhausted. When we can no longer grow food in our plowed up lawns, barter, spend cash or trade our cars and other possessions for food, then and only then, should we break open this supply.

You see when conditions have reached the point where the "food of last resort" has to be used, the **survival clock starts ticking**. If there is only a 2-year supply, that's exactly how long the family has to come up with a miracle to solve the problem of survival.

What about putting in a little at a time starting with a few basic grains and building up your supply gradually? Not a good option - see why.

Let's talk about "nickel and dimeing" a supply - putting in a little at a time starting with a few basic grains and building up gradually. Ten years ago that was an option, not now. Whatever is missing in that supply needs to be filled in immediately. If the supply isn't complete and nutritionally balanced, it is not a supply.

For example, let's look at two families.

One family has a 1-year supply of all the "basic" grains. The other family has a 3-month supply of fruit, vegetables, dairy products, proteins, grains and cereals. In short a complete and balanced supply.

How long will each family survive?

- The family with the grains will make it a few days before the beginning of dysentery, and scurvy - the illnesses the pioneers experienced on the same diet.
- The other family with the balanced supply will be fine for at least 3 months. Their only problem is poor judgment in the quantity of supply.

The conclusion is that if a supply is not balanced and complete, it is virtually no supply at all. The council to store what we eat is absolute.

How much is enough? That's up to every family. Is it better to have what you don't need or to need what you don't have?

Food Quality Considerations

Remember the co-op is responsible for screening the quality of food you receive. The following specifications are required of any supplier that would be allowed to supply your food.

- No genetically altered food.
- No imports from countries using illegal fertilizers and insecticides.
- No nitrogen packing on any seeds or grains, which need to maintain germination percentages.
- No "blends". (Dead seed or grain is blended with fresh grain to provide a low selling price while making a strong profit on the old grain.)
- No beans raised in heavy irrigation areas. (Removal of high moisture content causes hardness and the inability to cook or use legumes.)
- No "triple cleaned" wheat or other grains unless techniques for rock and insect parts removal have been used.
- No old "left over" foods. A lot of 6 and 7-year old food is circulating left over from the Y2K rush.

Don't ask a retailer whether they violate these specifications. If you were in business to sell emergency foods and you had \$30,000 worth of inventory left over from Y2K (some of which was genetically altered imported from Mexico or otherwise sub-standard), you probably couldn't morally see yourself doing anything but dumping it and taking the financial hit. You would never

consider selling it to people whose lives would one day depend on it. Unfortunately, there are many who are unable to resist the temptation to get their money back by selling it to innocent, unsuspecting people who don't know what they are getting.

Food Plan Requirements

Each 1-year Supply contains over 48 types of food. After adding water, all you do is cook like you would fresh, raw food-enjoying recipes from your favorite cookbooks.

You want your stored food to be as close to what you are currently eating as possible. Flavor and diversity are crucial. That's why the suggested food units include:

- More servings of fruit per day than most people now eat.
- 3-4 daily servings of vegetables.
- 3-5 servings of protein source foods.
- Meat substitutes are made from high-quality vegetable protein, which tends to be more usable by the body than meat. (Real meat cannot be stored without refrigeration or excessive chemicals.)
- Never flour-based mixes.
- Enough sprouting seeds to grow 1 1/2 cups of highly nutritious fresh sprout salad each and every day.
- All foods must have a 12-15 year shelf life.

Packaging and Storage

PACKAGING

All foods are packed in double enameled cans. Each container holds between 40 and 60 servings. Use the plastic lids once the can is opened. Store this way for up to one year.

STORAGE

Food for 2 adults (2 1-year units) takes about as much space as an average refrigerator. (The equivalent of canned foods would take up around 900 cubic feet or half of a normal size basement.) You can easily store your food in a corner of your basement or in a closet. Do not store in a garage or attic. Avoid temperatures in excess of 110° Fahrenheit (43° Celsius), for prolonged periods.

Additional Items

This is stuff you've got to have!

No matter what emergency food program you choose there are some items without which you won't be able to function. The following are some items that are both easier and more economical for you to acquire yourself. Quantities suggested are for one person for one year.

Sugar: Store 25 pounds of sugar or each adult. Sugar is heavy and shipping costs are more than it's worth. Sugar in self-storing and generally does not spoil.

Wheat: Store 200lbs. of whole wheat per adult. Hard white or hard red winter wheat is best. Wheat, just like sugar, is heavy and shipping costs become excessive. Always avoid storing flour due to rancidity and infestation.

Cooking oil: Get at least 10 quarts of your favorite cooking oil at the store. Oil has a shelf life of up to 2 years. It must be rotated. Buy it in quarts rather than gallons. You will have a smaller container open to spoil if you don't do a lot of cooking regularly.

Salt: This is another item to buy in the store. Do not pay "food storage" prices for salt or containers to store it in. Store 10lbs.

Raising Ingredients: Watch the expiration dates on these items and when necessary replenish your supply.

- Yeast (2lbs.)
- Baking Powder (2lbs.)
- Baking Soda (2lbs.)

Water: Even though the recommendation is to store a gallon per day for a 2-week period, store more if you can. The average person needs a minimum of 2 gallons a day for drinking, cooking, food preparation and personal hygiene not including showers and baths.

Water filter: Start using water purification equipment immediately. If this council is a bit strong for your acceptance, look into present and threatened water contamination in this country. You'll want to clean every bit of water you consume.

Garden Seeds-the restorable food supply: Whether a family has a garden or not, we suggest a supply of garden seed be stored. These seeds must be "non-hybrid", called heritage seeds like the pioneers used. They can be grown and replanted year after year endlessly. (Hybrid seeds won't reproduce properly after the first year.) These seeds must also be matched to the climate and growing season of your area.

Seven Mistakes You Should NEVER Make

- If you don't have enough variety and get "appetite fatigue," you might as well have no food at all.
- If you have a lot of basic food and nothing to make it work, you might as well have no food all.
- If you don't have the vitamins to keep healthy, the whole supply is devalued.

- If you don't have some easy foods for when you can't take another step, life can get hard.
- If the supply is not balanced for a complete diet, you really do have no food at all.
- If the supply is not stored properly, you will have no food at all.
- If you don't know how to use the food and your family won't eat it, you might as well have saved your money because you still have no food at all.

Everybody has heard that we need to "store what we eat and eat what we store." **The problem is that what most people eat, doesn't store.**

Questions and Answers

These are some of the most common questions we hear from people considering food storage.

Question. We've got some of that dehydrated stuff we bought about 15 years ago. It's probably no good. Should we give it away to a "needy" program or just throw it away?

Answer. Probably neither one. First replace it. Much of it is probably more than "passed its prime." But if you have the space, keep it. When you have to use your emergency food, open the old stuff first. If it's no good, you can always throw it away then. If it's good, use it or share it with the people we all will be feeding who weren't wise enough to prepare.

Question. My parents had a whole bunch of food stored for the last 20 years and never used it. Dad probably spent \$2000. Did he end up wasting his money? Is it possible to waste money storing food?

Answer. It's all in how you look at it. Your dad would probably consider that \$8.33 a month for the ultimate life insurance was a pretty prudent investment.

Question. We opened some food we bought a couple years ago in the Y2K rush. It was terrible, virtually unusable. We bought from an organization that had the cheapest prices. How could we avoid bad food?

Answer. Realize that with any product, expected value must be paid for reasonably. Be more skeptical of low prices than of high ones. Remember the old council "if it looks too good to be true, it probably is." When prices are particular low or high there's always a reason. Ask why.

Question. We've stored food for a long time and haven't needed it yet. Why should we store more?

Answer. Great, just like with health insurance, the best thing I could wish anyone is that they would never have to use their emergency food insurance.

Question. A common quotation is "If you're hungry enough, you'll eat anything." Is this true?

Answer. This quotation is usually repeated by someone who is not hungry. If you're hungry enough that you're willing to eat anything, your health is already in danger. So much of our health is affected by emotions that the majority of people, particularly children, are not able to stay healthy on food they dislike or are not accustomed to. (Our country's aid programs have proven time and time again that if you try to feed starving people whose diet consists of rice and raw fish by sending them boat loads of wheat and beef it doesn't work. The people continue to starve, the wheat is dumped in the ocean and the beef gets fed to the Canine Corps.)

Question. I have plenty of money. Will I always be able to buy what I need?

Answer. If food is not available, what value will cash or gold have to a person who has life itself (food) in his possession? What value does money have if it is unable to buy food?

Interesting note: The capacity to get enough or more than enough food has always been the ultimate and final measure of wealth. In hard times, food will establish the value of gold.

Warnings to Consider

Please think carefully about each of these warnings. They just may save your life!

Warning #1

There's a lot of sub-standard and old food available in the marketplace at this time. Some is 6 or 7-year old, leftover food from Y2K preparations. Some of the food is very low quality because some suppliers who are less than moral have discovered that the average person can't tell the difference between one dry carrot and another dry carrot. Many still have large leftover inventories from 1999. (It's certainly more profitable to unload \$30,000 worth of six year old food. After all it has a 15 year shelf life.)

Warning #2

Carefully check any supplies that you purchased in 1999. During 1999 over 200 food supply companies popped up many were selling inferior grade food to say the least. You're betting your life on what the lowest bidder put in those cans.

Warning #3

Absolutely avoid premixed flour based recipes like pancake mix, muffin mix, bread mixes, any items containing flour and raising ingredients. The flour will go rancid and the raising ingredients will go flat. Premixed flour-based recipes will also have chemical reactions between ingredients. Shelf life is usually very, very short. The reason these are included in plans by suppliers is that they are very cheap and they can make a supply look like you are getting a tremendous amount of food.

Warning #4

Avoid suppliers that include large amounts of wheat and sugar in their supplies (units.) Don't be fooled into comparing weight and calorie count of food units with excessive amount of wheat and canned or bucketed sugar. Suppliers put wheat and sugar in food units in order to raise the

calorie count and also the shipping weight of the unit to make you think you are getting more for your money. Don't buy more grains than you have fruits, vegetables, dairy products and sprouting seeds to balance in your diet. It's usually best to buy your wheat separately and never pay a supplier to sell you stored sugar. (Sugar is self storing. Buy your own.)

Warning #5

Never buy incomplete sections of food storage. For example, buying a lot of wheat. Second, buying grains and later some powered milk, etc.

A food supply is like baking a cake. You can put in the flour and the sugar and the raising ingredients, but if you can't afford the eggs, you have nothing. It's better to bake a smaller cake with all the ingredients.

Spend your available resources on a complete supply (balanced with fruits, vegetables, dairy products, grains and sprouting seeds), even if it will only feed your family for 3 months. Unless the supply is balance it just won't work.

Melvin has a two-year supply of wheat, beans, honey, milk and salt. John has a 3-month balanced supply of everything. Question: Who will last the longest in hard times? John has a sure 3 months. Melvin might not make it 3 days.

Warning #6

Buy enough food. Never rationalize what is enough based on your pocketbook. Think, study and plan!!! There are very few situations we are facing where a one-year supply would prove adequate. If we end up needing to be independent for three years, the poor guy that only has a one-year supply only prolonged his personal disaster. You can compare it to needing to make a phone call, but ending up standing in the phone booth all day long with 24 cents in your hand. Less than enough is no better than nothing.

Packing Food Supplies for Long-Term Storage

Food Grade Buckets

Five gallon plastic buckets for storing grain and legumes can be purchased in your local community. However, you should be careful to purchase food grade buckets as non-food grade plastic buckets can leach gas that will permeate through your food. Round plastic containers protect the contents better than square ones. Food grade, heavy-duty sealable plastic liners in new galvanized steel drums will work as well. The best buckets are opaque. You don't want to expose your food to light as it will diminish shelf life. If you are unable to find food grade buckets locally they are available from eFoods Direct.

Protection from Pests - The Bay Leaf Method

Pests are the the greatest threat to stored food. There are several methods used to insure that pests won't spoil your food supply. We recommend the bay leaf method as it is the easiest and least expensive.

Fill the bucket about one quarter full and place several whole bay leaves directly on the food. Pour in more grain or legumes until the bucket is about half full and put several more bay leaves on top. Do the same thing at three quarters full and finally place bay leaves on top of the filled bucket. Seal the bucket with an air-tight lid.

Proper Storage of Filled and Sealed Food Buckets

To insure that your food stays dry, buckets should be stored on a shelf or pallet and never directly on a cement floor. To maximize shelf life, store your food in a cool (40 to 68 degrees fahrenheit), dry place away from direct sunlight.

Salt and Sugar

Salt and sugar store almost indefinitely if they are kept dry. These items can be stored in the same way as grain and legumes. Because the volume of sugar and salt needed is considerably less than grains and legumes, you might consider storing them in #10 cans rather than five gallon buckets.

If you are a coffee drinker and purchase your coffee in the standard 2 pound cans with re-sealable plastic lids, you can save these and reuse them for storing salt, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and yeast. For added protection, you can line the cans with one gallon zip lock bags, then fill them with the desired product. Seal them tightly and store them in the same way you do the larger five gallon buckets.