

Pre-Storm To Do List: Your Emergency Food Supply



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Power outages from wind and rain storms, ice and snow storms will make life interesting. It can take days or even weeks to get the power restored after an outage. Plan and prepare before a storm hits.

When a Storm is Coming: Prepare

Start by making sure you have or buy a refrigerator/freezer thermometer. This can be found in the housewares department in your supermarket or your local hardware store. During an outage, the only way to know if food has reached an unsafe temperature (above 40°F) is by keeping track of the temperature of your refrigerator.

- If early weather warnings predict possible power failures, set the refrigerator, its freezer and any freestanding freezer to the coldest setting.
- Keep your freezer full. A full freezer will keep cold longer than a half-full freezer. Fill empty spaces with well-cleaned milk cartons or plastic containers full of water.
- Consider purchasing a gas-powered generator to keep your refrigerator running during an extended outage. Learn how to use the generator safely before the storm hits.
- Check/re-stock your emergency food and water supply; make sure supply is not out of date.
- Find out where to buy dry ice.
- Make sure you have enough water on hand for drinking (highest priority), cooking (making coffee, tea, instant cereal, etc.), pets, handwashing, cleaning, and flushing toilets (this does not have to be drinkable water).
- Have a gas or charcoal grill? Purchase enough fuel for several days.

Storing Emergency Food Supplies



Store your supply carefully; checking often, use older items and re-supply with new.

- Store canned and dry goods in a cool, dry, dark place; 40 to 60°F.
- Keep food away from gasoline, oil, paints, solvents and other household chemicals.
- Protect food from rodents and insects; use containers that are pest-proof.
- Date all food items. Use and replace food before it loses freshness.

Pre-Storm Menu Planning

Make a Shopping and Menu Plan

Are you preparing for possible loss of power for a few days (thunderstorms, snow storms, wind storms, tropical storms) or for a more significant period of time (ice storms, hurricanes, tornadoes)? If you live in an area where power is frequently lost for a few hours or days, plan for a 3 day outage. If you live in an area where it may take longer for a power company to respond, prepare for a longer outage. Keep in mind that nutrition becomes even more important when outages last a long time...make your food choices wisely! Don't forget the nutritional needs of pets, infants, or those on special diets.

Menu Ideas for Three Meals

Breakfast

- Use up any eggs from the refrigerator in the first day in cheese omelet*, bread and butter, juice, coffee* or tea*
- Cold cereal with bananas, reconstituted dry milk, coffee*, tea*, or water
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich, canned peaches, coffee*, tea*, or reconstituted dry milk
- Bread and cheese, orange, coffee*, cocoa*, tea*, or water



Lunch/Dinner

- Tuna, whole grain crackers, apple, water
- Canned beef-barley soup*, processed cheese, crackers, reconstituted dry milk
- Bean salad (canned beans, canned green beans, onion, garlic, oil, vinegar), bread and butter, pear, water
- Early in the outage—canned hash, fried egg*, tomato salad with oil and vinegar, water
- Canned chili, crackers, corn, water
- Tuna with white beans, olive oil, vinegar, bread, butter, canned carrots, reconstituted dry milk



Snacks: Cheese, crackers, dry cereal, granola or cereal bars, nuts, dried fruit, chocolate, apple with peanut butter.

*Requires cooking-gas stove, charcoal grill, camp stove, or wood fire (outside only!). Some foods, such as canned soups, canned pasta dishes, chili, hash, though typically heated before eating, do not REQUIRE heating for safety.



Pre-Storm Shopping List

Protein Foods

Canned meat or poultry -

- Chicken, hash, beef stew
- Canned ham - make sure it does not need refrigeration
- Canned meat/poultry soups

Canned fish/seafood -

- Tuna, salmon, sardines

Dried meats/poultry/seafood -

- Jerky
- Dry cured sausages, pepperoni

Canned beans -

- Canned chili; Pork and beans/baked beans
- Kidney beans, chick peas, white beans, etc.

Other canned/package protein items -

- Canned pasta or rice with meat or cheese
- Tuna products in pouches
- Nuts/Peanut butter

Fruits and Vegetables

Fresh -

- Tomatoes
- Onions, garlic
- Apples, pears, oranges, bananas

Non-perishable canned fruits -

- Applesauce, peaches, mandarin oranges, cherries

Dried fruits -

- Raisins, apricots, prunes, blueberries, cranberries

Canned vegetables -

- Potatoes, carrots, corn, green beans

Carbohydrates/starches/fiber

- Whole grain breads, rolls
- Whole grain crackers
- Granola bars or other cereal bars
- Ready to eat cereals
- Instant hot cereals

Dairy Foods

- Dry milk; cocoa mixes
- Canned or Shelf-stable (Ultra-pasteurized (UHT)) carton milk (individual sized—unable to refrigerate after opening)
- Processed cheese food
- Cheddar cheese or other hard cheeses will keep for several days to a week or longer at room temperatures

Baby foods

- Formula
- Pedialyte or similar product
- Jarred baby foods: meat, poultry, beans, vegetables, fruits

Pet foods

- Dry food
- Canned food
- Treats

Miscellaneous food supplies

- Tea, instant coffee (or if you have a French press, buy coffee ground for the press)
- Oil, vinegar
- Butter, margarine
- Salt, pepper
- Sugar
- Cookies, hard candy, chocolate, pudding
- Electrolyte drinks such as Gatorade
- Vitamins

Food related supplies

- Disposable eating utensils
- Paper plates, cups
- Paper towels
- Manual can opener
- Bottle opener
- Matches
- Cooking fuel
- Cooler/ice

Sources:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/recallsoutbreaksemergencies/emergencies/ucm2006925.htm>

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/emergency-preparedness/a-consumers-guide-to-food-safety-severe-storms-and-hurricanes/>