

# A Mad Dash Through Walmart:

## How to Prepare for Disaster BEFORE the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour

**Author's Update:** Originally, this book was written with the intent of preparing for disaster at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, so you'll see some references below to that effect. This is obviously not feasible for a variety of reasons. (Events such as Hurricane Katrina, the blackouts of 2003, as well as any yearly “Black Friday” shopping spree should be proof enough of societal reactions.) Therefore, the intent of this book is to aid with your disaster preparations BEFORE it strikes. Duh!

Anyway, I guarantee you that with the information you now have in your possession you WILL be more prepared for a disaster than nearly everyone you know. Why? Because **you're taking the best first step in your preparedness lifestyle:** you're gaining the knowledge—and very soon the equipment and supplies—to weather 99% of what life can throw at you!

Although you may feel you're now prepared simply because you have this in front of you, please understand that **you must act sooner rather than later**. Please DO NOT wait until the 11th hour to acquire what you're lacking! There are nearly 270 items listed below—all of which can prove very useful to you in your time of need—and that's not even including your Home Depot list.

As you might imagine, it would be very difficult—ok, impossible—to fit all of these items into one or two shopping carts especially when everyone else is trying to do the same thing. ☺ **Spend your time and money NOW to fill the gaps in your preparedness plan.** Then go back and bolster your supplies as needed.

Certainly it is far better to already have these supplies rather than to be literally fighting your neighbors for the last flashlight and batteries on the shelf.

Having said that, if you're literally looking at this list for the first time and it is the 11th hour then I would print the companion **11th Hour Checklist** and focus (as most others would) on non-perishable groceries, water, and pharmacy supplies. Everything else on this list is honestly secondary to the basics of food, water, and first aid. (Note: I am assuming that you still have your house as shelter and an assortment of clothing as personal protection from the weather.)

A few last points to consider:

- o A Super-Walmart is necessary due to the grocery and pharmacy lists.
- o Although I would expect that most of these items are available at nearly any Walmart **there is no guarantee that they will be available at your local Walmart stores** because of seasonal or geographic concerns, or for some other reason I'm unaware of.
- o Likewise, I cannot guarantee that these supplies will be located in the departments that I say they're located in.
- o Last, and certainly not least, **please do not expect that any of these items will be readily available in a disaster scenario...** others may have already beaten you to them! Work to acquire your supplies NOW.

**CAUTION: Although this is a very specific list of supplies I feel everyone should acquire to adequately survive most anticipated emergencies for a short period of time, please DO NOT consider this as all-inclusive since you may have unique needs or circumstances.**

# Table of Contents

A Mad Dash Through Walmart:	1
How to Prepare for Disaster BEFORE the 11th Hour	1
Table of Contents	3
Grocery & Household Essentials	5
Groceries	5
Cleaning Supplies, Paper & Plastic	16
Pest Control	23
Pharmacy, Health & Beauty	26
Pharmacy – Wound Treatment	26
Pharmacy –Supplies and Equipment	31
Pharmacy – Medications	36
Health & Beauty	45
Electronics	50
Automotive	55
Lawn & Garden	61
Home Improvement	66
General Hardware	66
Hand Tools	81
Camping Equipment	85
Other Items	94
Home & Office	94
Sports & Fitness	95
Toys	97
Baby	98
Pets	99

Kitchen & Dining.....101

Clothing.....103

Crafts.....106

Front Registers.....106

Miscellaneous.....108

Noticeably-Absent Items.....110

After Thoughts.....112

## Grocery & Household Essentials

### Groceries



Besides water—and excluding obvious perils like exposure to extreme cold—**there is nothing more important than food** when survival is concerned. You simply cannot have enough on hand. Stock as much non-perishable food as you can since you never know how long you'll be on your own or who will show up on your doorstep to quickly deplete your precious reserves.

Although I give specific recommendations below, you should really only purchase food items that you're accustomed to eating. There's no point in having food on-hand that you'll never eat... that's no way to prepare. Remember the adage “store what you eat, eat what you store” and you'll be fine. But, if you need a few ideas, here you go...

### Bouillon Cubes

Bouillon cubes are little more than dehydrated broth, usually beef or chicken, and a bit of seasoning. They are a convenient way to make otherwise bland foods tasty in a snap. Since they are inexpensive and will last for some time I would suggest buying one or two jars of both beef and chicken bouillon. As there are about two dozen cubes in each jar you will be able to enjoy many meals.

### Canned & Packaged Beans

Beans (a basic staple food) are high in protein, fiber, an assortment of nutrients, and are low in fat. You'll want a variety of beans, including black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans, and even baked beans; frankly, any beans are fair game.

Canned beans are the easiest to stock for emergencies but packaged beans are useful as well. Although packaged beans typically require soaking in water before being cooked, you will often get more beans for your dollar in a package; the only drawback being the use of your precious water resources.

### Canned & Packaged Gravies

Like bouillon cubes, gravies are a great way to make a bland meal desirable. An assortment of canned gravies (e.g., mushroom, turkey, chicken) is recommended. If water is readily available then packaged gravies will save on space and, if you can find them on sale, then a few dollars too.

While gravies are perhaps not the best foods for your health because they are high in saturated fats and sodium (salt), I would suggest that they make a useful addition to your preparedness pantry specifically for these reasons.

Fats and salt, in particular, are a necessary part of your diet. In a normal diet you want to limit your intake; however, in a calorie- and nutrient-restricted environment you'll want a ready means to include these necessities in your diet...gravies do exactly that.

### Canned Chili

Canned chili, such as those made by Hormel, are a quick and easy meal some people are accustomed to eating in their normal diet. I highly recommend you stock up if your family fancies them on occasion. The only caution I would offer is to avoid purchasing any spicy or hot chili, even if you're used to it, because these

chili's may not react well with your digestive tract assuming your habits, physical activity, and even stress levels have been altered due to a disaster.

## Canned Fruits

Many Americans, including me, are spoiled with the rich availability of a variety of fruits year-round, they are definitely a part of our diet. Unfortunately, the availability of fruits may be severely limited or completely lacking post-disaster.

This fact is not only a major disappointment for those who enjoy fruit daily but also a major change in one's diet. About the only way to combat this problem is to stock up on canned fruits. Although not as nutritious as fresh fruits, canned fruits are still packed with nutrients and are the best you can do for last minute storage.

### ----- Sidebar -----

You might consider canning your own fruit or even dehydrating. There is plenty of information on the Net as well as many good books on the subject of canning and food storage. Visit <http://rethinksurvival.com/net-guide/long-term-food-storage-and-bulk-foods/> for a ton of links regarding food preservation.

## Canned Meats

Because meat is another major part of many American diets, as well as a key source of protein, you'll want a way to supplement that food source. Unfortunately, about the only way to accomplish that is in the form of any canned meats you can get your hands on. Tuna, Albacore, Vienna sausage, even Spam are all options.

While I wouldn't recommend you go overboard purchasing canned meats, they will add variety to your meals and even lend to your ability to "keep meal ideas fresh" if you simply adjust the type of meat a recipe calls for; you may even find a new favorite meal with such experiments.

### Canned Soups

Canned soups are a standalone meal and will certainly be among the first non-perishable food purchases to disappear in light of an impending disaster. Clam chowder, beef barley, chicken noodle, and others are all great additions to your pantry. I would even persuade you to purchase a handful of each of these soups now so you will have them around when needed.

### Canned Vegetables

Vegetables, like fruit, are a major part of one's diet; If they're not, they should be. Vegetables are packed with nutrients and are necessary to a healthy diet. As there are any number of vegetables you can buy canned, let your imagination run wild. Buy green beans, corn, peas, and nearly anything else you can get your hands on. Vegetables easily add welcome variety to many meals... stock up.

### Cereals

Although not first on my list of preparedness foods, cereals—in all their forms—offer a welcome breakfast alternative to most survival food ideas. And, if you have children, they're probably expected. Buy a few boxes of your kid's favorites and maybe a few staple cereals like Cheerios and be done with it.



## Coffee Packet Singles

If you enjoy your morning cup (or pot) of coffee then going without it for days or weeks on end because the coffee pot doesn't work is not an acceptable level of survival by most standards.

Coffee singles, such as those made by Folgers, offer what you need to keep your nerves about you. Since they last for quite some time I would suggest you purchase a box or two and store them away. Then, before they expire buy another box or two and use up your singles in place of your regular coffee grinds for a while.

## Crackers

Another pleasant snack food to keep around are crackers. My family is partial to Saltines and Ritz, although there are a number of varieties to choose from. While crackers may not be the healthiest of foods they do offer a welcome change in tastes and can keep a hungry stomach and mouth busy for a while. I would suggest a few boxes of your favorites as well as a few boxes of Saltines, specifically, because they keep fairly well.

## Dry-Mixed Food Packets

Dry-mixed food packets can indicate any number of foods from Lipton soup mixes to instant oatmeal. Because these packets are in dry powder form they will last quite a long time and make for useful quick meals or side dishes.

### ----- Sidebar -----

Dry-mixed food packets are also useful in bug out bags since they are lightweight and take up very little space.

-----

Purchase a box or two of your favorite soups for lunch as well as a few boxes of instant oatmeal for breakfast.

### Fats & Oils

Cooking oils such as vegetable oil and olive oil, are critical to a complete diet and are a requirement for many recipes. Fats such as butter or lard, are also an essential part of any long term preparedness plan.

Unfortunately, fats are far less suited than oils to even short term storage because of rancidity concerns due to a lack of refrigeration. For this reason you should focus on oils and forget the fats. Buy at least one or two large bottles of oils to ensure you have enough and rotate them through your daily usage.

### Fresh Fruits

Even if most of the canned and packaged foods have not been picked over I would still choose to purchase quite a bit of fresh fruits if this is truly last minute. Beside vegetables, fruits are a great source of nutrients in one's diet.

Sadly, many fruits will not last long, even with refrigeration. As such, I would focus my purchasing power on fruits that can last for weeks without refrigeration, namely apples, oranges, and to a lesser extent, bananas. Do not purchase fruits that perish quickly—unless there is no other option—such as grapes or berries.

### Granola Bars

Granola bars are another tasty snack food that is good for on-the-go situations as well as for lengthy disaster scenarios. Since they store fairly well without refrigeration (often for months on end) there is no harm in stocking up on your

favorites and replenishing on occasion. Whatever you choose to do, I would ensure you have at least a few small boxes of granola bars on hand at any one time.

### Hard Candies & Gum

Candy and gum are another great way to keep a hungry mouth busy. They are also an obvious source of sugar if you need a boost. Focus on hard candies such as Jolly Ranchers or Mints to ensure they last longer in storage as well as in your mouth. Several packs of most any chewing gum can be useful too.

### Mashed Potato Flakes

Mashed potatoes such as instant flakes made by Betty Crocker, are inexpensive, easily to prepare, and have been an American staple food for decades. They're easily whipped up in minutes and usually only require water to reconstitute them, although milk may be an optional ingredient. Most kids love them and they make a wonderful side dish for many meals. Consider purchasing at least a few boxes.

### Packaged Dinner Sides

Dinner sides—those that have noodles or rice as bases such as Knorr—can be easily prepared meals themselves. Since they're packed dry, such dinner sides can be stored for months or longer without worry. There are countless options to choose from. Grab a variety to keep your meals interesting. A few dozen packages should suffice for most scenarios.

### Packaged Noodles

Packaged noodles such as Kraft macaroni and cheese or Ramen-in-a-cup, are ready meals that most children enjoy. Because they only require water to reconstitute them they're an excellent longer term storage option. If you eat packaged noodles

regularly now then I would suggest you stock up on them to ensure you have at least a few dozen boxes/packages around the house.

### Pasta and Pasta Sauce

Pasta is another American staple food. Since pasta is easy to prepare, inexpensive, and comes in a variety of styles, it makes an excellent addition to your pantry. Buy typical pastas like spaghetti and elbow macaroni in the largest packaging possible. Obviously, you'll want a variety of pasta sauces to complement your pasta choices; stick with normal red and white sauces and you'll be fine.

### Peanut Butter and Peanuts

Peanut butter is an excellent calorie-dense source of protein and fats. It will store for months after opening; I would suggest a few large jars of Jiffy or any other popular brand. Peanuts are similarly a good source of protein and fats. I would purchase mixed nuts for a variety of flavors.

### Powdered Drink Mix (Pre-sweetened)

Although water is necessary for life and may be the best thing you've ever tasted when really thirsty, oftentimes it is nice to flavor water because our taste buds are so accustomed to constant stimulation.

For that reason, I would buy a variety of drink mixes, including fruit punch, lemonade, and cocoa. Drink mixes should be pre-sweetened if possible. Powdered drinks store for significant periods of time. Purchase some now and replenish your supplies before they expire.

## Powdered Milk

Powdered milk (a.k.a., “dry milk”) is, in my opinion, useful in any kitchen regardless of disaster preparedness. In a disaster situation, on the other hand, dry milk will be your only means of a milk substance whatsoever. While not quite the same as regular milk, you can use it for any purpose where milk is called for including in cereals.

I would encourage you to purchase at least one or two large boxes of powdered milk as you can go through it fast when refrigerated milk is unavailable.

## Pretzels

I would consider pretzels just like crackers: they are a welcome snack food that gives a hungry mouth something to do. Unfortunately, their unique shape means you will be storing a lot of “dead space” in the packaging so you won’t get a lot of calories out of one bag. Buy one or two bags just for something different.

## Rice

Rice is a staple food in many cultures. Although rice gets a bad reputation for being stripped of its nutrients during processing, manufacturers have figured out how to add some of those nutrients back.

Regardless, you’re buying rice for the calories and to act as a means of bringing other foods together, such as canned gravies, canned vegetables, and so on. Buy as much as you can in the largest bags possible—at Walmart that’s about 20 pounds.

## Seasonings

Salt and pepper, above all others, are the most important seasoning to have on hand. It's difficult to have enough of either, especially salt. Since you must have salt to survive I would encourage you to buy it in the largest containers possible and store it for later. If stored dry, salt doesn't go bad or deteriorate over time. You can't go wrong buying a lot especially since its inexpensive now.

Because pepper is used more sparingly than salt there is no reason to buy pounds of it, although a few containers won't hurt. I would also encourage you to have enough of any other spices you may use regularly, such as those used to spice up pasta sauce or for whatever dishes you may choose.

## Sweeteners

So many foods are better sweetened. Buy the basic sweeteners such as honey, granulated sugar, and creamer if you use it in coffee. If you have the choice, buy honey before everything else as it tends to go with nearly everything and stores indefinitely.

### ----- Sidebar -----

If honey has hardened (crystallized) it can be reconstituted simply by heating it in a pot of hot water until it turns to liquid again.

-----

## Tea Packet Singles

Similar to my coffee advice, if you're a tea drinker then stock up on the tea packet singles such as those made by Lipton. Buy a few boxes now, store them for later use, and be sure to rotate through your stash over time.

## Trail Mix

Trail mix is yet another snack food option. Depending on the trail mix you purchase, it can include a significant amount of calories or nutrients. Buy a few packages for grins.

## Water

You simply cannot have enough water. **I'll say that again: YOU SIMPLY CANNOT HAVE ENOUGH WATER!** I'm not kidding. However, if you insist I put a number on it then about two gallons of water per person per day would be the bare minimum I can advocate. Although you may read sources that say you can get by on about a half-gallon of water per day (some sources indicate even less) these estimates are absolutely unrealistic given the many uses it serves.

Think about it. You'll definitely need potable water for drinking, cooking, washing dishes, and basic personal hygiene (i.e., brushing your teeth or hand washing). You may also find uses for greywater, which is leftover water not suitable for consumption from activities such as bathing or washing dishes.

As you might imagine, this adds up. Honestly, five gallons of water per person would be more appropriate. Even at two gallons, for a family of four over a course of two weeks, that adds up to 112 gallons. Try getting that much water into your shopping cart...even if you did you won't be able to push it by the way.

If you insist, however, buy gallon jugs or, better yet, the three and five gallon jugs used in personal water dispensing systems offered by Culligan.

Last, understand that water is heavy, weighing in at about eight pounds per gallon. Keep that in mind when considering where to store it and how to transport it during an emergency.

### ----- Sidebar -----

If you want to know more about topics such as rainwater harvesting, water purification, greywater, and more, spend some time reading these resources:

<http://rethinksurvival.com/net-guide/long-term-water-procurement-and-treatment/>

## Cleaning Supplies, Paper & Plastic

Although keeping your home clean may be the last thing you're worried about, in an extended disaster situation **cleanliness is a critical component to healthy survival**. If utilities and services are expected to be unavailable for more than a few days then I would recommend you do not skip these supplies. The



possibility for disease transmission can be much greater in this situation given that there may be widespread sanitation problems, a lack of proper nutrition in your diet, as well as plenty of disease-carrying pests rudely invading your space.

## Aluminum Foil, Heavy-duty

Aluminum foil is useful for a variety of tasks. Clearly we use it on occasion to aid with cooking foods, however, it can be more important to this endeavor in a disaster scenario that you realize.



For instance, if you expect to be cooking foods on a grill or over a campfire then aluminum foil can be used to help retain juices as well as to prevent foods from being scorched. You may find yourself using it over and over again.

### ----- Sidebar -----

There are other interesting applications for aluminum foil that may prove useful such as a bug out bag fire reflector, radiant heat reflector for windows (to aid with passive cooling), and radiant heat insulator for solar cookers and solar heaters.

Buy and store it with food preparation in mind but understand the potential for other uses as well. Be sure to purchase one or two heavy-duty rolls and you'll be set for most disasters.

### Bleach, Must NOT contain additives

If the power is out and you are unable to boil water for purification purposes then bleach will be your main method of disinfecting water. It will also be your **primary method of sanitizing nearly everything** I can think of, including pots and pans, wash buckets, table and counter surfaces, equipment, and so on.

It's that important. Although one large bottle of bleach should be able to disinfect hundreds—if not thousands—of gallons of water, you may need plenty of bleach for sanitizing and general cleaning. In fact, you can go through a lot of bleach in an extended disaster situation. I would suggest at least one or two large bottles to see you through.

Also, you **MUST** ensure that it does **NOT** contain any additives such as scents. Regular 5.25% calcium hypochlorite Clorox bleach is just fine. You should also

know that bleach breaks down fairly quickly even in an unopened container. Therefore, it is not something that can be stored for years on end. You'll want to replace your bottles roughly every six months (and preferably every three months) or so to ensure its efficacy. Since it's cheap you can do this fairly easily.

How much bleach should you use to disinfect your water? The generally accepted belief is that about eight drops of bleach should be enough for one gallon of water. That works out to about one-half of a teaspoon per five gallons of water. If the water is cloudy then you will use a bit more bleach.

Let your nose be the judge. Water should have a slight chlorine scent to it. If it doesn't smell slightly like chlorine then you can repeat the dosage, however, you should realize that **higher concentrations of bleach can be toxic** especially with prolonged use! As such, the use of bleach for water treatment should probably be limited to a week or two. Pregnant women and those with compromised immune systems might want to find a non-chemical long term water treatment method.

In all situations, stir the bleached water thoroughly and then let the water sit for at least thirty minutes after treatment to allow time for the chlorine to work. If the water is very cold or cloudy then wait at least an hour.

Please also understand that chlorine is not a panacea of water treatments. There are some disease-causing microbes that are highly resistant to chlorine and iodine chemical treatments. **Boiling is always the preferred method for disinfecting before any form of consumption, cooking, or hygiene.**

If a disaster scenario is expected to last for more than a week or two then I strongly urge you to have a primary means of disinfecting water on a regular basis that does NOT require bleach or boiling. While not available at your local Walmart (and a bit expensive) I would suggest something like the Big Berkey water filter for such situations.

### Dish Soap

The ability to keep your pots and pans, dishes, and cups clean in order to reduce the spread of disease is a requirement regardless of a disaster or not. Purchase liquid dish soap like Palmolive or Ajax and use it every time you wash dishes.

### Dish Sponges

Dish sponges such as Scotch Brite make short work of cleaning pots and pans. If you are forced to clean your dishes without running water then you're going to want to do it as easily as possible. Buy a pack of two or more to see you through.

### Disinfectant Cleaner

Besides bleach, I would stock any number of other disinfecting cleaners to help keep your home as sanitary as possible since water may be in short supply. Brands such as Lysol will work just fine.

### Disposable Eating Supplies (Plates, Bowls, Cups, Utensils)

Whether you choose to use paper goods on a regular basis or not, I would highly encourage you to stock up on them to prepare for disaster for a variety of reasons.

First and foremost is a **significant reduction in disease transmission**. While families are often exposed to many of the same germs simply because of their

constant proximity to one another you could very well have others sharing your living space for some time.

Although additional “guests” may be extended family members, friends, and neighbors they are still sources of germs your immediate family may be unaccustomed to. And, since **improperly or inadequately cleaned eating supplies is a primary means of disease transmission**, you can cut down on this possibility merely by using all disposable supplies including paper plates, paper bowls, plastic cups, and plastic utensils.

Second is the **need to reduce the amount of water and bleach needed** to properly clean and sanitize your eating supplies. Assuming three meals a day for even a few days would result in a lot of dishes to wash. Most of us are accustomed to using the dishwasher so much so that we’re relatively unaware of how many dishes we actually use in one day. Since water is so important you’ll want to avoid using it if you don’t need to.

Third, and while this may be a stretch, **there is no reason for you to have to spend your time cleaning and scrubbing dishes** when you may have more important concerns to attend to. With disposable dishes you can simply toss them in the garbage and get on to more important tasks.

With these considerations in mind, I recommend you purchase at minimum a few dozen eating supplies per person. It couldn’t hurt to add a few more dozen sets for unexpected guests. Certainly, this can quickly translate into hundreds of paper plates, bowls, cups, and utensils that you’ll need to stock.

## ----- Sidebar -----

I would also get into the habit of labeling each individual's cups with a permanent marker so they can be reused, which reduces waste and minimizes the spread of diseases.

### Paper Towels and Napkins

Stock up on a few packs of napkins and several rolls of papers towels, if not more. You'll want to use them instead of dish towels whenever possible, especially for wiping down surfaces and even for drying hands.

### Plastic Storage Bags (Gallon and Quart Sizes)

Plastic food storage bags in both gallon and quart sizes such as those made by ZipLoc are useful for reasons other than food storage. Because they're plastic they make excellent temporary water barriers for nearly anything I can think of. One box of each should be plenty for most short-term needs.

### Toilet Paper

One simply cannot have enough toilet paper. I don't know about you but I have no interest in plucking leaves off the nearest tree simply because I didn't have enough toilet paper stashed away. Purchase dozens of rolls or more depending on the size of your family. Since it stores fairly well then I would suggest you purchase plenty before-hand as toilet paper is one of the first items to sell out post-disaster.

### Trash Bags, 13-gallon

You're going to need a place to put all of your disposable eating supplies and other garbage waste. The typical 13-gallon kitchen trash bag (preferably with draw-

strings) will do nicely. Buy a sturdy brand like Glad or Hefty as you would not want it to rip and cause a huge mess.

If you have any interest in creating a make-shift potty using a five-gallon homer bucket then you're going to want plenty of 13-gallon trash bags to line it with.

### Trash Bags, 33-gallon

The larger 33-gallon trash bags are a bit more useful than a typical kitchen trash bag. While they can definitely serve the same purpose of garbage collection, you can also use the larger trash bags for other purposes such as in lining large containers to collect rainwater (only temporarily because they do contain unwanted chemicals), as a make-shift lightweight rain poncho, or to temporarily mend a broken window in a pinch.

#### ----- Sidebar -----

When on foot, large trash bags can be used as a moisture barrier, a low budget dry sack, a make-shift bear bag when hiking, or an emergency dromedary for water collection; the possibilities are only limited by your imagination.

#### -----

### [Optional] Dust Pan and Broom

Water, eating supplies, and countertops aren't the only considerations that should be kept as clean as possible. A trusty dust pan and broom will go a long way to ensuring your floors are clean, assuming they're not carpeted, of course.

### [Optional] Facial Tissue

Plenty of unwelcome stuff comes out of your nose, never more so than when you're sick. While you can certainly use napkins and toilet paper to blow your

nose, facial tissue such as Kleenex will help to save your other supplies for their intended use. One or two boxes of tissue per person should be more than enough.

### [Optional] Plastic Wrap

Plastic wrap can be used for more than keeping foods fresh. Since it's a very workable plastic you can use it to create water barriers around anything you don't want to get wet. It can also be used to improve a bathtub drainage seal in order to keep water from slowly draining out... assuming you filled your bathtub in preparation for disaster. One roll of a brand such as Reynolds will go a long way.

### Pest Control



Like cleaning supplies, I would imagine you're wondering why pest control is even remotely important. Well, given that bugs are difficult enough to control, in an extended disaster situation **pests could become an overwhelming problem due to an expected pest-favorable atmosphere.** That is, bugs like things dirty and grungy! Disasters provide this precise environment. It is best to be ready for them before they invade your humble abode.

### Ant Bait Gel

Ants are a common problem in everyday life. While ants probably won't be a major concern in a disaster (and if they are then ant gel won't help you a lot), you will certainly want to control them where you can. Purchase a name brand gel such as Raid or Combat and use it at the first sign of these pesky intruders.

### Flea Spray

Animals can undoubtedly attract fleas and ticks in everyday life. Post-disaster fleas and ticks could become a significant problem (especially in summer months)

simply because typical lawn and yard maintenance is not being performed. That is, lawns are not cut, brush isn't being kept down, and insecticides are not being used. You'll want to be able to combat these pests if need be.

### Fly Swatter and Fly Tape

Flies are a constant nuisance, particularly in the summertime. Given that you will be apt to encounter abnormal problems that are conducive to flies such a lack of garbage removal and/or people improperly disposing of fecal waste, you can imagine that flies will be a huge difficulty in any extended disaster scenario. You need to be able to deal with them both passively (such as with fly tape) and actively (with a fly swatter).

#### ----- Sidebar -----

An option for passively dealing with fruit flies and gnats is to use a two-liter soda bottle. Cut the top one-third of the bottle cut off then invert and insert it into the bottom two-thirds of the bottle; tape the cut edges together. Finally, fill the bottle half-full with sugar water (or vinegar and water) to attract and kill many flies.

### Mouse/Rat Traps

You never know if or when mice and rats will show up. And when they do show up they're difficult to get rid of even with an abundance of traps and bait. Disasters provide a real opportunity for mice and rats to thrive in simply because of a lack of garbage removal. Besides that, **rodents carry diseases you don't want.**

### Roach Bait

Roaches are another real problem. Just like flies and rodents, roaches will thrive post-disaster. You must be able to manage them since they can carry diseases.



Roach baits such as Raid or Combat will help to control their populations until things get back to normal.

Besides bait, you should ensure that you floors and countertops are as clean as possible (hence the bleach, broom, and dust pan previously mentioned). This is why meticulous cleaning comes into play. Pay particular attention to underneath and behind large objects or appliances, such as your cooking range and behind the refrigerator... roaches love it there.

### Rodent Bait

Rodent bait is an alternative means of dealing with mice and rats. Consider stocking some in addition to traps.

### Wasp Spray

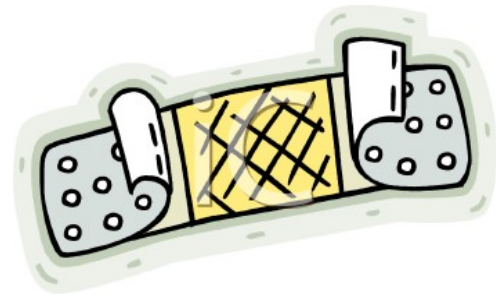
Wasps and hornets could also prove to be an irritation as well. You'll want to keep a quality wasp spray such as Raid or Spectracide around to adequately deal with them before they become a real problem. Disasters are the WRONG time to have an unexpected allergic reaction to a wasp sting.

## Pharmacy, Health & Beauty

**WARNING: The following information should NOT be constituted as medical advice in any way. ALWAYS seek appropriate medical care whenever and wherever possible!! It's the smart thing to do.**

### Pharmacy – Wound Treatment

Appropriate and timely wound care is a **key component** of your ability to adequately deal with an emergency. Like food, you can't have enough bandages or first aid supplies. Stock up while you can now.



### Adhesive Bandages, Assorted Sizes

Bandages are a basic necessity to common household wound care. While every family should stock an assortment of sizes in their first aid kit, there is no need to go overboard with bandages as they have limited usefulness in wound coverage and application. Gauze pads, alternatively, are often more appropriate for disaster-related wound care in my opinion.

### Adhesive Gauze Pads, Assorted Sizes

Gauze pads are a **necessity when it comes to more significant wound care** than simple bandages alone. Because it is usually preferable to completely cover a wound—in order to reduce contamination as well as to limit moisture exposure—adhesive gauze fills the bill. (Sterile gauze is always preferable to non-sterile gauze because it is guaranteed to be microorganism-free.)

Buy at least two or more boxes as it is easy to go through gauze pads to treat even a single wound. Honestly, several boxes of multiple sizes would be even better.

### Antibacterial Ointment

You'll want to ensure that bacteria don't find a happy home in a healing wound. A good quality triple antibacterial ointment such as Neosporin is a must. One large tube should be enough to see you through most scenarios.

### Burn Gel

Burn Gel is basically a solution of 2.5% lidocaine, among other stuff. It is useful for taking the edge off of minor burns by helping to draw out the heat and cool the affected area. Since it is a water-soluble gel it dissipates slowly and lasts much longer than plain water. Water-Jel also has slight antibacterial properties, which is helpful to prevent infection. One bottle should be enough.

### Butterfly Closure Strips

Keeping an open wound as closed as possible is normally a good thing. Sometimes you'll find wounds that are too long or oddly shaped (such as a laceration) to be covered properly by either bandages or gauze. If you have no other choice, butterfly strips can bridge this gap and act essentially like make-shift sutures. One box of quality strips such as Band-Aid brand should be enough.

### Disposable Gloves (Latex-free)

Disposable **gloves are obligatory to minimizing disease transmission** from caregiver to patient and vice-versa. Buy quite a few since you can go through them fast. Most medical professionals would recommend you purchase latex-free gloves because some individuals have latex sensitivity. Stock a box of 50 or more gloves and get in the habit of using them whenever performing wound care.

## Elastic Bandage

An elastic bandage, often referred to as an ACE wrap, is useful for applying pressure around an injury or for supporting an injured area. This could include to reduce swelling, hold gauze in place, or to secure hot and cold packs.

Elastic bandages come in typical widths ranging from two to six inches, although, three inches is a good size in most cases. I would stock more than one elastic bandage in the event two people require the use of one at the same time.

## Gauze Rolls, Assorted Sizes

Gauze rolls are usually meant to apply slight to moderate compression to a wound while holding a gauze pad in place. While limited in usefulness to a layman, you can go through gauze rolls very fast. Stock several each of an assortment of sizes between two and four inches in width to cover your bases. (Sterile gauze is always preferable to non-sterile gauze because it is guaranteed to be microorganism-free.)

### ----- Sidebar -----

Clean linens cut in long strips can serve a similar purpose.

-----

## Hand Sanitizer

Having the ability to keep your hands clean and sanitized is another **critical requirement with regards to proper wound care as well as for general sanitation** in a post-disaster environment. Think about it for a moment.

You should neither expect that water will be available for hand washing nor should you expect it to be clean. You will probably even be engaging in activities that get

your hands dirty more often than usual. Add these factors together and you may soon realize that hand sanitizers are the best thing since sliced bread.

I suggest you stock several bottles of hand sanitizer and place them in obvious locations throughout your home post-disaster to encourage their use. Additionally, consider purchasing a hand sanitizer that includes moisturizers since the alcohol in the sanitizers will tend to dry out your hands.

### Isopropyl Alcohol and Hydrogen Peroxide

Medical professionals generally believe that the use of either isopropyl alcohol or hydrogen peroxide is not necessary for minor wound cleaning. Rather, **a thorough cleaning with soap and water are all that's necessary**. Regardless, I'm still a firm believer in using hydrogen peroxide to clean a fresh wound.

Isopropyl alcohol has other advantages such as for skin disinfecting and even as a fire-starting aid since it burns readily. I actually keep a large bottle in my car for this reason. 70% isopropyl alcohol should be good enough for most purposes but 91% will work better. Stock at least one or two large (32 oz.) bottles to ensure you have enough.

Hydrogen peroxide (3% solution) also has uses beyond a topical skin cleanser. Although I've never tried it, people say that a soak in 50/50 solution of hydrogen peroxide and water for several days will kill toe and fingernail fungus. It can also be used to remove ear wax buildup. I do. Stock at least one or two large (32 oz.) bottles to ensure you have enough. Do a bit of research online and I'm sure you'll find other neat uses for both isopropyl alcohol and hydrogen peroxide.

## Moleskin

Moleskin is a tried and true method for dealing with pesky blisters on your feet. If you're prone to getting blisters then be proactive and use the moleskin to prevent them. If you need to cushion a blister you recently acquired then you can cut moleskin to fit around the blistered area thereby relieving the pain and aiding the healing process.

## Non-Adherent Gauze Pads, Assorted Sizes

As I've mentioned before, gauze pads are a necessity when you're on your own for some time. Non-adherent gauze pads are special because they are designed to be less likely to stick to wounds, which is a good thing. (Note: Sterile gauze is always preferable to non-sterile gauze because it is guaranteed to be microorganism-free.) Buy at least one or two boxes in assorted sizes of a good quality gauze pad such as those made by Band-Aid. Again, more is usually better if you can afford it.

## Waterproof Adhesive Tape

Adhesive tape is used to secure non-adhesive gauze pads in place. Buy waterproof tape (most are) to ensure it sticks as well as possible under the most rigorous of circumstances. Buy at least one or two rolls or more depending on the how many gauze pads you buy. Know that you can go through tape relatively fast so you may want more than what I suggest.

## [Optional] Eye Pads

Eye pads are uniquely designed and shaped to deal with minor eye wounds. Be sure that you purchase sterile pads due to their close proximity to a mucous membrane pathway... your eyes.

### [Optional] Liquid Bandage

Sometimes you can get pesky cuts that are difficult to bandage properly due to their location such as a nasty paper cut between fingers or small cuts to the scalp where bandages may not adhere properly because of one's hair. Fortunately, a liquid bandage such as New-Skin solves this problem.

Although some would say that cyanoacrylate products such as Super Glue could perform the same function, I would still recommend a liquid bandage because the liquid bandage is not only made for this purpose but usually includes an antiseptic to aid in proper healing.

Additionally, there may be some concern for products such as Super Glue to break down in the body and form toxic byproducts when used in this manner. I don't know for sure. I would rather be safe than sorry.

### [Optional] Specialty Bandages (Knuckle, Finger-tip)

There are a few specialty bandages that may prove useful too. These include bandages designed to adhere suitably around the finger-tips and knuckles. Given that your hands are used so often, you're most likely to get cuts and scrapes there in emergency situations.

## **Pharmacy –Supplies and Equipment**



Equally important to wound treatment supplies, the additional supplies and equipment you keep in your first aid kit may prove vital to properly treating medical

problems in your time of need. Remember that if you don't have it you can't use it... so be sure to have it.

### Digital Thermometer

Although fevers are your body's way of dealing with foreign invaders, you don't want a fever to get too high. As such, you'll need a thermometer to keep tabs on a high fever. (**Consult appropriate medical advice for specific dangerous temperature ranges.**) Certainly, this is most critical in young children and infants. A typical dependable digital thermometer is inexpensive and will last a long time.

#### ----- Sidebar -----

For infants you might consider an ear thermometer. They take temperature in seconds and are more easily tolerated by youngsters.

-----

Additionally, you should know how to interpret temperature readings from various body locations; the most used locations being the mouth and armpit, as they will not be exactly the same readings.

### Disposable Thermometer Sleeves

Hand-in-hand with a digital thermometer is disposable thermometer sleeves, which are **intended to minimize disease transmission**. The sleeves are very inexpensive and are for one-time use.

Although you can disinfect your thermometer with something like isopropyl alcohol, I would still recommend sleeves because it is easy to forget to clean a thermometer after use, especially in the middle of the night. Buy a box or two and



keep them with your thermometer. In fact, get in the habit of placing a new sleeve on thermometer as soon as you're done using it.

## Face Masks

One of the most important supplies any family can have in order to reduce disease transmission (for flu season and such) are dozens of good quality face masks.

A good quality face mask will **drastically reduce the amount of airborne disease-causing particulates that come into contact with two critical mucous membrane pathways**—the mouth and nose.

Although there are better alternatives that I would recommend in the event of a true flu pandemic, N-95 or surgical-grade face masks should suffice in most cases.

### ----- Sidebar -----

The “95” in N-95 indicates the masks are expected to reduce the number of airborne particulates contacting your mouth and nose by 95%.

I should note that there is some concern as to the efficacy of such face masks to honestly reduce airborne particulate contact by such a large degree given that the seal around one's face is not perfect. I'm not a doctor so I can't say for sure.

I do believe, however, that you and your family are far better off with a face mask than without. N-95 masks are readily available in packs of two to twenty. I would suggest that you purchase enough masks so that each family member has at least several masks. Understand that these masks are meant to be used only once and then disposed of.

Also know that **it WILL be difficult to breathe easily**, which is a major drawback to using these masks. I would suggest you try wearing one for even 10 minutes now and see how you do. If it's too difficult (or uncomfortable) then spend the money and get masks with a one-way (exhalation) valve, which are usually sold individually. Although significantly more expensive, they will be MUCH easier to wear for extended periods of time.

Furthermore, **I would certainly consider using face masks in any situation where there is a large amount of airborne dust and especially when around any known contagious persons.**

### Instant Cold Packs

Cold packs are intended to provide a short term source of localized cooling when ice is unavailable. Given that your power may be out and ice is either unavailable or being used for more critical needs such as keeping your perishable foods viable, cold packs are a great resource to keep around.

Use them anytime the application of ice packs would be appropriate such as with muscle strain. Stock at least one or two cold packs per person. They keep for years and are a great addition to bug out bags and vehicle kits.

### Petroleum Jelly

Also known by the name brand Vaseline, **petroleum jelly is a superb product.** I keep a bottle at home and in my vehicle kits because it seems to last forever and can provide for several critical functions unlike any other product.

For instance, petroleum jelly can be used to protect cuts where antibacterial ointment is unavailable, as a lubricant, and even to start fire since it burns very well once lit.

### [Optional] Assorted Braces

Muscle strains can be a significant hindrance in normal times; disasters are no time for them to cause even more troubles. If you know you're prone to knee, back, or ankle problems, then I would suggest you grab an appropriate brace to help alleviate the pain and strain if you do not already have one.

### [Optional] Blood Pressure Monitor

Blood pressure monitors do exactly what the name implies. Consider stocking one if you have known blood pressure problems. Additionally, you should know how to use your monitor and practice using it so that you know how to operate the device properly and can correctly interpret the results. It would also be beneficial for you to train someone else on how to do this as well. Ensure it takes batteries and you have some on hand.

### [Optional] Earplugs, Disposable

Ear plugs certainly reduce the harm done by loud noises. While normal activities such as lawn mowing and weed eating are appropriate times to use them, you may also find appropriate reasons to use them in a disaster as well.

For instance, perhaps you'll be using a chainsaw to remove a felled tree blocking a road or maybe you're hammering tons of nails into your house to board up windows for a coming hurricane. Who knows what the reason could be. Better to

have them now rather than to pay for it later with loss of hearing. I recommend you purchase at least several pair.

There's also another benefit to earplugs: light sleepers should stock up on ear plugs as well. For those of us, including me, that are accustomed to noise while we sleep (such as the constant hum of a fan) then dead silence may be a new and unwelcome experience. Ear plugs, therefore, provide an easy way to combat that silence and may provide for a much needed and restful sleep.

### [Optional] Stethoscope

Stethoscopes can be used to check for heart and lung ailments. In the right hands they can be used to diagnose critical problems that might otherwise go unnoticed. Although useful, I wouldn't recommend one unless you know how to use it or are otherwise expected to be in the presence of somebody who does, such as a doctor or nurse.

## **Pharmacy – Medications**

You may think that besides a basic pain pill there isn't much else to bother stocking in your first aid kit. On the contrary, **there are a number of additional medications that could go a long way to making a disaster scenario survivable**, perhaps even comfortable.



### Antacid/Anti-Gas

The pain of stomach upset, indigestion, heartburn, and bloating afflicts many Americans every day. The good news is that antacids/anti-gas products such as Maalox help to reduce stomach acidity thereby offering much needed relief.

Although antacids/anti-gas treatments are only a temporary solution, know that drastic (and unwelcome) changes to our “insides” usually accompany drastic changes in our diets and/or physical activity. Prepare for this unexpected—and unwelcome—event just in case.

### Anti-Diarrheal

An anti-diarrheal like Imodium A-D usually contains the ingredient Loperamide, which is a medicine used to slow intestinal movements. In fact, an anti-diarrheal is one of those products that you may wonder why you need to stock. After all, diarrhea may be discomforting but seldom worrisome.

Unfortunately it's the worrisome forms of diarrhea that you need to concern yourself with, especially where urgent medical care may not be available. Know that **some waterborne diseases that you would never have a second thought about cause serious, even worrisome, diarrhea.**

You'll need to be able to counter this because of the serious possibility of life-threatening dehydration. Be aware that families with young children should be wary of using this medicine because children can be very sensitive to its effects and, in fact, its use may even hide the signs of dehydration. As such, only use as a last resort and be sure to replace lost fluids regularly.

#### ----- Sidebar -----

Electrolyte solutions (such as Pedialyte) are commonly used in concert with anti-diarrheals to combat the effect of fluid and salt loss from dehydration. In fact, you

can make your own electrolyte solution. The World Health Organization recommends using one liter of water, ½ teaspoon of salt, 6 teaspoons of sugar.

---

### Anti-Fungal Cream

Foot problems can be a serious hindrance post-disaster. In fact, foot fungus may be a more prominent concern after disaster due to reasons such as fewer bathing opportunities, more hours working in the same shoes and socks, less sanitary water used for bathing, or whatever.

Anti-fungal creams that contain Clotrimazole are used to make short work of such fungus problems and allow you to get back to more important business. Indeed, it can be used for more than just foot fungus. For instance, Clotrimazole may be used to treat other problems such as yeast infections and jock itch, to name a few.

### Antihistamine, Non-Drowsy

Allergy season is dreaded by many people, including me. If disaster strikes at this inopportune time and you're left unprepared without an antihistamine, you could be in miserable shape or worse—unable to do much of anything you need to. You'll want a non-drowsy formula such as Sudafed to be sure you're ready.

### Anti-Itch Cream

Whether it's an insect bite or a brush with poison oak, you'll want something to alleviate the itching so you can concentrate on more pressing concerns. A topical antihistamine such as Benadryl Topical Cream is your best OTC bet.

----- [Sidebar](#) -----

Other alternatives include Calamine lotion, or, if you prefer a more natural approach, oatmeal is a viable alternative. Likewise, Aloe Vera tends to have some anti-itch properties too.

---

## Cough Drops

Cough drops such as Halls usually contain menthol, which is helpful with suppressing nagging coughs. There are a wide variety of cough drop brands and flavors to choose from. Know that cough drops (used to suppress coughs) and throat lozenges (used to soothe sore throats) are not the same thing, although there are combination drops that do both. Since cough drops are inexpensive buy a bag or two and you'll be set for a few cold seasons.

## Decongestant, Non-Drowsy

Decongestants work to reduce the inflammation and swelling of the sinuses and nasal areas consequently allowing you to breathe easier. If you're prone to allergies and often find yourself with a stuffy nose then decongestants are your solution. Even if allergies aren't a concern, you never know what could be in the air to cause nasal congestion. Purchase a non-drowsy formula such as those made by Sudafed so you can stay focused.

## Expectorant

Coughing, although annoying, is usually a good thing. It's your body's way of expelling something that doesn't belong there. Unfortunately, sometimes the body needs help and that's where an expectorant (containing Guaifenesin) like Mucinex comes in. In fact, expectorants may be able to assist in dealing with acute upper

respiratory infections to the point of avoiding more serious problems such as pneumonia. Regardless, be wary using this with young children.

### Eye Drops (for Dry Eyes)

Eyes dry out as a normal course of being awake. Exposure to wind and dry climates tend to exacerbate the problem. Eye drops are meant to temporarily alleviate this trouble. While there are many brands available, I'm partial to Visine.

If you don't regularly use eye drops for dry eyes and, hence, have a brand you're partial to then just buy any recognizable name brand. If you suffer from allergies and associated itchy eyes then certainly pick up an antihistamine eye drop as well.

### Foot Powder

Gold Bond foot powder can be used proactively to avoid foot problems such as foot fungus and blisters by reducing the moisture contacting your skin. It can even be used reactively to control foot odors and soothe minor itching. If you're susceptible to such problems then Gold Bond may be just the thing.

### Laxative/Stool Softener

Laxatives (such as Ex-Lax) and stool softeners are used to treat constipation. Both work to retain more water in one's stool making it easier for the stool to be moved along the bowels. Believe it or not, **expect constipation to be a big problem in an extended disaster scenario**, especially with young children. Why?

For starters, **any disaster may cause you to drastically alter your diet from the foods you're normally accustomed to eating** to anything you get your hands on. This usually spells big problems for bowels in the short term. Even minor changes



in a diet (especially with children) can cause constipation. Fortunately, if you “store what you eat, and eat what you store” this should be less of a concern.

Regardless, **you may also be drinking less water** (a necessity for properly digesting food) which can increase the probability of constipation. Additionally, you may be very stressed as a result of disaster. Stress can cause many unwelcome problems, including constipation. You need to have a means (or two) to effectively deal with this predicament. I would recommend either a laxative or stool softener for adults.

### ----- Sidebar -----

If you have young children (still in diapers) then a suppository is more appropriate.

-----

If you're unsure about the use of a laxative, then Metamucil is an alternative bulk-forming laxative and fiber supplement; the active ingredient is natural psyllium husk seeds. Besides constipation, Metamucil may also be used to treat other bowel-related problems such as irritable bowel syndrome.

### Lip Balm

Lips can dry out even faster than your skin, particularly in winter months. Lip balm is specially designed to combat this dilemma in that it evaporates slowly when exposed to sun, wind, and cold. In so doing, lip balm seals in moisture and provides long-lasting lip protection.

Buy well-known name brands like Blistex or Carmex. You may even find that using lip balms with sun protection (includes an SPF rating) that you can avoid

sunburned lips on bad summer days. (By the way, if your lips are sunburned you're probably dehydrated as well!) Lip balms are available in so many flavors and varieties that you may have difficulty choosing one you like.

### Nasal Spray (for Congestion)

Similar in intent to an oral decongestant, nasal sprays such as Afrin are used to temporarily relieve sinus congestion by constricting blood vessels in the nose.

While useful, you should be cautioned about overuse of these products as they can be habit-forming and even damage mucous membranes in the nose.

There are a number of other options available, including more natural saline (salt) sprays, as well as sprays such as antihistamine sprays for allergies and hay fever.

### Pain Relief/Fever Reducer

Any well-rounded first aid kit should include a well-known oral pain relief (and fever reducing) medication such as Ibuprofen or Tylenol. While I stock both medications I'm partial to Ibuprofen, which is filtered through the kidneys whereas Tylenol is filtered through the liver. Stock one large bottle of each pain reliever for completeness.

#### ----- Sidebar -----

It's my understanding that you can alternate Ibuprofen and Tylenol every two hours to control more painful symptoms because of what body organs filter them. Be sure to check with your care provider before attempting this.

-----

## Sun Block, Waterproof, SPF-30 or better

Sunburns are a normal part of being outdoors. Post-disaster you may find yourself engaged in many more outdoor activities than you're used to. **In the summer months this could be a recipe for bad sunburns.** Although there are many brands available, I like Coppertone myself. Whatever you choose, purchase a sun block that is waterproof with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or better... and remember to apply it liberally.

## Sunburn Relief

Sunburns are painful. I can't tell you how many times I've needed Aloe Vera to soothe bad sunburns. Now that I'm older I'm learning the obvious benefits of sun block, although, I'm still occasionally lax in application at times. For those with young children, definitely stock up on Aloe... they'll need it.

## Topical Steroid

Hydrocortisone, a topical steroid, is used for the treatment of acute skin problems including rash and dermatitis due to its anti-inflammatory properties. Although the OTC versions of hydrocortisone are relatively weak (usually a 1% solution), they are still useful in dealing with most minor skin rashes that may be encountered. It can also be used for localized itching as well.

## [If Necessary] Child Pain Management

**If you have young children then an oral pain medication and fever reducer is a must.** Know that children can have more “normal” reasons for pain management than you do such as toothaches or growing pains. My wife's not a big fan of using medications unless we must, so, we certainly use it sparingly on our children. At any rate, I stock it just in case.

Additionally, **you do not want to be attempting to dose your adult Tylenol or Ibuprofen medications for a young child** unless the directions specifically say so. You could easily get it wrong and do more harm than good. Get a good quality brand such as Children's Tylenol and pick a flavor your children will stomach.

### [If Necessary] Prescription Medications (for you or dependents)

Although this is listed last, it should probably be first on the list. If you or your dependents rely on prescription medications, especially for life-sustaining needs, then you **MUST be sure to get your prescription medications filled**. Although every medication script is different, you'll want to do your best to get at least a two to three week supply, if not more.

In fact, your prescription medications are so critical that **I urge you to discuss this need with your doctor (and pharmacist) ASAP**. Be open and honest with him or her and tell them that you want to stock these life-sustaining medications for disaster preparations.

Don't go overboard and ask for a three year supply. Be realistic. Get your doctor engaged. Ask their opinion. Show them you know what you're doing with your medications. If they're still unwilling to assist you then consider looking for a new doctor. It's your life, take charge of it and be proactive now!

## Health & Beauty



Basic health and personal hygiene supplies should not be overlooked, even post-disaster. From soaps to vitamins, and even the trusty toothbrush, you'll want to grab as much as you can to stay healthy and fit.

### Bar Soap

Bar soap is the de facto standard when it comes to soaps. You need it to keep clean. Bar soap last for many years, wears away slowly, and cleans admirably. I would recommend you buy it in bulk if possible. Several bars should meet your family's emergency needs. An antibacterial soap such as Dial or Dove is preferred.

### Condoms

I would suspect that a disaster is the wrong time to get pregnant for most people. Stock up on one or two boxes of condoms just to ensure that doesn't happen.

### Dental Floss

You need more than toothbrushes to keep up with your daily dental hygiene; dental floss is critical to this endeavor. Since floss lasts seemingly forever and is difficult to replicate to modern standards in nature buy plenty of it if you can.

### Feminine Pads

Appropriate feminine hygiene won't stop because of a disaster. Purchase at least one or two boxes of pads per menstruating female to be on the safe side.

----- Sidebar -----

FYI, feminine hygiene pads are also VERY effective at dealing with significantly bleeding wounds since they're able to absorb a lot of blood. Consider them for this purpose as well.

---

### Fluoride Rinse

An appropriate rinse will help to ensure that dental hygiene continues to spotless perfection. Buy one or two large bottles and I guarantee the dentist will be proud of your unyielding commitment. ☺

### Hand Soap

I'll try not to beat a dead horse, but, **proper sanitation is a MUST!** Hand soap, just like bar soap, will further that end. Buy at least several bottles and place them everywhere you would wash your hands, making them readily available.

### Magnifying Glass

You may not think you need a magnifying glass. Nevertheless, common problems such as splinters and ticks can be difficult to see without one. Who knows what other reasons you can find to have one handy? As a fire-starter, perhaps?

### Multi-Vitamins

Like sanitation, **proper nutrition is vital to your overall health and well-being.** Unfortunately the foods you may be relying upon post-disaster may not be nutritionally complete. In fact, you may be consuming a nutritionally-deficient diet for quite some time.

Although not a problem for only a few days or even weeks, **given enough time a nutritionally-deficient diet will become a problem.** Fortunately, a quality multi-vitamin such as Centrum will help to alleviate this problem. Purchase at least one multi-vitamin bottle per person to see you through even a lengthy disaster.

### Temporary Dental Filling

Given that teeth are hyper-sensitive when they are broken in some fashion, you'll need a way to mend such troubles ASAP. Temparin, like other OTC dental fillings, is made with zinc oxide (among other ingredients) and is meant only as temporary cement for a loose crown or as minor filling material.

This is certainly not a permanent solution for teeth problems. That said, it may be your only answer if a disaster prevents you from seeing your dentist for some time. One small bottle is usually good for at least a few treatments.

### Toothache Pain Relief

Broken teeth and loose crowns are a significant predicament; however, general toothaches are also a bother and seem to popup at the most inconvenient times. Children, in particular, are more prone to such troubles. Anbesol is a way to soothe such aches. One bottle should last a long time.

### Toothbrushes and Toothpaste

**Toothbrushes are THE key to appropriate dental hygiene.** I would suggest at least one set of toothbrush and toothpaste per person. Since they last for years, you could certainly stock more toothbrushes if you like. Consider saving the toothbrushes your dentist gives you for this purpose. I do.

## Wet Wipes

Wet wipes are a very useful alternative to hand sanitizers for personal hygiene. They have the added benefit of providing something to physically wipe your hands against while cleaning them at the same time. I suggest you stock at least several packages that all family members can share. Place them in areas where you would normally wash your hands.

## [If Necessary] Contacts and Solution

If you rely on contacts then you must have the supplies required to replenish your ability to see properly. Stock whatever you need with regards to your contacts as if you were going about your normal life for at least two or three weeks.

## [If Necessary] Denture Supplies

Everyone understands the need to chew food. Stock whatever supplies you need to go about your normal life with regards to dentures for at least two or three weeks.

## [If Necessary] Glucose Tablets

Glucose tablets may be needed by diabetic or hypoglycemic individuals in order to restore low blood sugar levels. Keep them readily available just in case.

## [If Necessary] Hearing Aid Batteries

Disasters are a unique time to truly need all of your faculties. The ability to hear is definitely one of them you will need. Since hearing aid batteries can last a while, you probably won't need dozens of them, although, it can't hurt to have several on hand since the batteries should be viable for years to come.



### [If Necessary] Smoking-Cessation Gum

Cigarettes may be difficult to come by post-disaster and are definitely not helpful to your ability to perform any number of physically-demanding, disaster-related tasks. As such, this may be a welcome opportunity to ditch a bad habit. Anyway, you will need a way to control nicotine cravings. Smoking-cessation gum or patches may be the answer. Buy enough to last a few weeks or more.

### [Optional] Personal Hygiene Items

These items are so obvious in their need that I felt I would be doing your intelligence a disservice in actually explaining their usefulness. Besides, I would expect you to already have these items around anyway. If you do not own some of these items or you're running low, you should stock up.

The following list is for your reference [all are optional]: comb/brush, deodorant, disposable razors, shaving cream, hand towels/washcloths, hand/body lotion, nail clippers, shampoo, tweezers.

## Electronics

Although most of the electronics department can—and should—be skipped over when considering disaster preparations, there are still a few very useful items that should not be overlooked.



### Alkaline Batteries, AA and AAA

**Batteries are critical to a few devices that are very useful during a disaster.**

This includes equipment such as flashlights, battery-powered lanterns, AM/FM radios, smoke alarms, and even a weather radio.

Of course, I'm assuming that most of these items will require either AA or AAA batteries; nevertheless, **you should know what type of batteries each of these devices requires** as well as how many.

Tally up the total number of batteries used by the aforementioned equipment and purchase enough alkaline batteries for at least two, if not, three replacements. You might be surprised at how many batteries this could be. I would say at least three to four dozen AA batteries and say two dozen AAA batteries would be a starting point. Purchase name brands such as Duracell or Energizer.

### AM/FM Radio, Battery-Powered

A good battery-powered AM/FM radio is another very important device after a disaster. You will need to stay informed and the best way to do that—if not the only way—without a functioning television is via radio.

**I can't stress this enough: Your radio will probably be your ONLY means of communication with the outside world.** The television, internet, and even cell phones likely won't work. Be sure your radio is battery-operated and that it is protected from the weather. I would urge you to at least store your radio high off the ground and inside two (even three) layers of quality ZipLoc bags in the event of flooding or other foul weather.

Like a flashlight, know that you will be using your radio a lot, perhaps hours at a time. This will drain battery life quickly. Assuming that you could be using your radio for days on end... batteries will be depleted. Stock up accordingly.

### NOAA Weather Radio

**Weather radios can be life-savers.** I've had one for years and highly recommend all families include one in their home. These days weather radios are inexpensive and can be programmed to only receive alerts for your specific county so long as they incorporate Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) technology; most weather radios do have this feature.

A basic radio such as the Midland WR-100 will serve most people very well. Whatever you purchase, be sure it functions on batteries and uses the SAME technology to avoid undue false alarms.

### Other Batteries (C, D, 9-volt)

You need to consider what other devices use batteries that may not be AA or AAA batteries. Such devices that come to mind may include some smoke alarms, a carbon monoxide detector, and perhaps a D-Cell Maglite, for example. Maybe your radio uses C batteries. You need to find out.

Take stock, tally up, and purchase two to three replacement sets accordingly, particularly where flashlights and radios are concerned. I would probably only purchase one set of replacements for your smoke alarms since they're expected to last for several months anyway. Again, purchase name brand batteries such as Duracell or Energizer.

### [Optional] Disposable Camera

A camera would come in handy to document damage caused by a disaster to your property for insurance purposes. While I would expect you to have your own camera there is no guarantee that it will have enough battery life or that it will even function when you need it to. For instance, it may have been damaged or become wet. **Battery life concerns are worth repeating as many digital cameras use non-standard batteries** such as Lithium 123A or proprietary batteries, which makes it difficult to replace (let alone charge) your camera batteries if you had to.

A disposable camera such as those made by Fuji, could be the answer. Consider purchasing one that is waterproof to improve its chances of functioning when you need it to. A built-in flash is also desirable. Most disposable cameras that I am aware of use a single AA battery which is easily replaced if need be.

### [Optional] GMRS/FRS Radios

A handheld GMRS/FRS radio (walkie-talkie) is a useful device for communicating with another person from a significant distance away. While radio literature often boasts communication distances ranging from several miles up to 80 miles or more, a realistic distance in a city environment is closer to one or two miles at most, depending on any number of factors. Regardless, a walkie-talkie such as

those made by Cobra, can prove useful for those who have a large plot of land, find themselves in a bug out situation, or if you just don't want to walk downstairs.

**Be sure that the units you purchase use AA or AAA batteries and not a proprietary battery** that must be charged from your home wall electricity. Know that walkie-talkie devices WILL use a lot of batteries. As such, it is not recommended for those without the ability to charge batteries such as via a solar charger or your car's 12 volt battery. Of course, you could choose to buy dozens of alkaline batteries just for this purpose but it's probably not the best idea.

### [Optional] Rechargeable AA Batteries

Rechargeable batteries would be very useful in an extended disaster situation, that is, if the disaster were to last for months on end. Fortunately, few localized disaster scenarios would be this drastic.

Unfortunately, most people do not have the means to adequately recharge batteries without 110-volt home electricity. Thus, they are not a "required" purchase. If you do choose to purchase some then, again, buy a good quality name brand such as Energizer and limit your purchase to no more than a pack of eight.

There are other charging options that could work in a pinch, including a solar powered battery charger, or a DC-powered battery charger that can be plugged into a vehicle's cigarette lighter. Although I haven't seen these sold at Walmart, they are available on the Internet. I have even purchased a fast battery charger with DC input from Best Buy in the past that will work for this purpose.

## ----- Sidebar -----

A strategy I employ is to use rechargeable batteries for everyday use such as in television remote controls, Wii remotes, and the like. I then reserve my alkaline batteries for emergency uses (among other odd uses) and then periodically check my supplies to make sure I have what I expect to have.

### [Optional] USB Drive

While a USB drive is more of a “bug out” item than a home disaster item, I would still recommend you purchase one. Because you cannot assume that your power and, therefore, your computer will be working for some time **you never know what important computer documents you may need to access after a disaster.**

The USB jump drive is a great tool to deal with this situation. **Obviously, you would need to copy any information from your computer to the USB drive BEFORE power goes out.** I would recommend you get a jump drive well in advance and get into the habit of updating files regularly, at least every month.

What should you store on the drive? That’s up to you. Perhaps you have important business documents, a list of passwords, important contact information, scanned images of legal documents, or even family photos. (If it were up to my wife it would all be photos.) Then store it someplace a bit more secure such as a fire safe.

USB drives have come down in price recently to astronomically low levels. You can easily purchase an 8GB Sandisk drive for under \$10, which should be plenty of space to store most anything you need.

## Automotive



The automotive department should also be a very quick grab-and-go area. Besides a few maintenance items for your vehicle and the all-important gasoline cans, most of what you can find here may also be found your local auto parts store if you find the need.

### Antifreeze

Antifreeze is a basic vehicle necessity. Although I would not expect that your vehicle would need it, you never know. Better to have some and not need it that to need it and not have it... right?

### Funnels

Funnels may seem unnecessary at first. Nonetheless, as you begin to realize that certain precious commodities such as water or gasoline could be severely limited for a period of time, **the ability to gather every last drop becomes crucial.**

For instance, you may find yourself needing to transfer water from one container to another, often many times. Each time you do so, therefore, is an opportunity for spillage and a loss of precious water. The same can be said for any other fluid such as gasoline.

### ----- Sidebar -----

Since some fluids like gasoline are extremely harmful you will definitely want to keep your funnels separated and used for only one specific purpose.

-----

Have one funnel specifically for water, one for gasoline, one for oil, and so on. Regardless of how well you think you cleaned a funnel there will still be residue you absolutely do not want to consume later. Funnels are cheap. Buy at least a few and mark on them their purpose with a permanent marker.

## Gas Cans

One of the first commodities to go post-disaster is gasoline. **Ensure you're among the first to get some for your vehicles and store more just in case.** You'll want to store at least as much gasoline as one vehicle needs to completely fill the gas tank. About twenty gallons should cover most vehicles. As such, four five-gallon gas cans should suffice. Adjust the number of cans as you see fit.

Rotate your stock every six months by using it in your vehicles, then fill up the now gas cans the same day. Fuel life can be extended for up to one year or more with an appropriate fuel stabilizer.

Whatever you do, **be sure to store your gasoline in safety approved gas cans and always follow any local laws regarding the amount and location of your fuel storage.** Improper fuel storage can be a disaster waiting to happen!

It would also be prudent to ensure your vehicles are as full as possible in general. While I wouldn't expect you to go to the pumps to top off every day, I would certainly never let my vehicles get below one-quarter of a tank and usually try to fill up with only a half of a tank left. I advise you to get into the same habit.



## Jumper Cables

Jumper cables are something everyone should carry in their vehicles regardless of a disaster or not. I seem to use mine nearly every year. Get a set for each vehicle then store them in the trunk. While difficult to get wrong—positive to positive, negative to chassis ground—I would still urge you to be aware of the few basics of properly connecting and disconnecting the cables to avoid any unnecessary shocks to your body or vehicle electrical system.

## Motor Oil

Like antifreeze, motor oil is another basic vehicle necessity. A case of motor oil will last a long time. And, although, you can let your vehicle go longer without an oil change if you must, there's no reason to do so if have motor oil available. Beside that, I would encourage you to keep a quart or two of oil in your car in case you need it to top off your engine on long trips.

## Power Inverter

This could be one of the most important purchases for short term disasters simply because you can now harness the power of your vehicles to keep your small electronics (including cell phones, laptop, ipods, etc) charged. In fact, depending on the amount of fuel you have stored, you may be able to keep such devices running for quite some time.

## Tire Sealant

Another item I stock in each of my vehicles regardless of disaster preparation concerns is a flat tire sealant such as Fix-A-Flat.

Though I'm not an auto mechanic, I've heard that some of these flat tire sealants can actually damage your vehicles tire rim. As such, I would only resort to using it if I had no other choice. Clearly, after a disaster you may have no other choice.

Keep at least one can of a tire sealant in each of your vehicles just in case. If you find need to use the sealant, get your vehicle to an auto mechanic right away in order to inspect and fix the tire properly! Remember, tire sealant is only a temporary fix.

### Windshield Washer Fluid

Washer fluid can last a long time in normal situations. I would suspect, though, that you probably clean your windshield more often than you realize either at the car wash or using a squeegee at the gas pump. Since these may not be options in a disaster you may find that you use far more washer fluid than normal. Indeed, it's difficult to get anywhere when you cannot see through the windshield.

### [Optional] Car Jack and Jack Stands

You may find the need to perform basic or emergency vehicle maintenance after a disaster... even maintenance you've never considered doing yourself in the past. Hence, you may find it very difficult to get at the underside of your vehicles without a car jack. Be sure to purchase one that is approved to lift your vehicle's weight. Additionally, a good set of jack stands would be a necessity as well.

Please note: It is very dangerous to rely on a car jack alone to support your vehicle. They have been known to collapse without warning. **Jack stands are a must.**

Since I wouldn't expect the average person to perform this kind of vehicle maintenance—especially if you haven't done it before a disaster—the car jack and stands are optional last minute purchases.

### [Optional] Fuel Stabilizer

Gasoline will usually be viable for months without treatment; however, adding a quality fuel stabilizer such as Stabil will prolong its life for up to one year. Since most disasters are not expected to last that long, fuel stabilizer is also optional.

(Diesel fuel can also benefit from stabilizers, though, its shelf life is often much longer than gasoline, even without treatment.) If you're still concerned about gasoline longevity then one small bottle (8 oz.) should treat about 20 gallons.

#### ----- Sidebar -----

Although I've never used it, I've heard good things about an alternative fuel treatment called PRI-G. I've heard that you can treat gasoline and expect it to be viable for years and it may even be possible to use PRI-G to make “old” gasoline viable again.

-----

### [Optional] RV Toilet Treatment Tablets

If you're using a porta-potty and potentially storing your waste indoors then you'll want a means to treat and minimize the odors. Although products like cat litter (and even good old dirt) will help control odors somewhat, **RV toilet treatments will work significantly better because they are specially formulated for this purpose.** Consider purchasing at least two or three packages.

### [Optional] Siphon Hose

Siphons are neat tools. While there are a few different designs, their purpose is the same, that being, to suck fluids out of something (such as a gas tank) and into something else (such as a gas can). Although the same tasks can be performed using a garden hose, gravity, and bit of suction, I would urge you not to do this with any harmful fluids (e.g., gasoline) due to the high potential for ingestion.

### [Optional] Siphon Stopper

On the other hand, you may be interested in preventing others from siphoning the gasoline from your gas tank using a siphon hose. This nifty little device is meant to do just that. Of course, there are easier (and faster) ways to siphon gas from a gas tank but I won't share that method. ☺ Additionally, you might then find it impossible to siphon gasoline from one of your vehicles to another so think about your intentions before installing such as device.

### [Optional] Straps/Tie Downs

Although I suggest you buy an assortment of ropes that can certainly be used to secure items to your vehicles, a good set of ratcheting tie downs will work a lot better. If you own a truck then I'm pretty sure tie downs are a must anyway.

### [Optional] Tire Plug Kit

A tire plug kit is necessary to properly repair a flat tire when stranded. I would suggest every household have one set and enough plugs for several tires; most kits include several plugs so that shouldn't be a problem. Since this requires performing unusual maintenance, I consider this an optional purchase for most.

## Lawn & Garden

The lawn and garden department will likely prove to be a useful stop for most people. While you won't be purchasing such items as walkway pavers or patio furniture, the few items you do want could prove to make your life significantly more bearable.



### Patio Solar Lights

Patio lights are all the rage these days. It seems everyone I know has them, including me, but I keep them for a different reason: **you can use patio lights as a ready means of low-level light in your home.**

#### ----- Sidebar -----

While a single solar patio light won't illuminate a room, they will provide lighting similar to that of a really bright night light.

Before you discount this idea all together consider the need for you and your family members to safely navigate your home without tripping or bumping into anything. People will need to get up to use the bathroom. Strategically placed patio lights can be used to provide enough lighting for this very purpose, thereby saving precious flashlight batteries and bulbs for more pressing tasks.

You can even increase the amount of illumination potential by reflecting the light off of a mirror; certainly a bathroom would be idea for this purpose. To use this idea, simply place the patio lights outside each day to recharge and you'll be ready to go that night. Obviously this is a bit of work but may be well worth the effort.

Patio lights may have one other unexpected benefit, namely, you can use them to charge rechargeable AA batteries, albeit very, very slowly. If you're low on alkaline batteries and you expect the disaster to last some time then this may be a solution. You simply need to remember to remove the rechargeable batteries before nightfall (or disconnect the light) so you don't drain them down powering the patio light at night. Given enough time you can recharge batteries doing this.

### Propane BBQ Grill and Equipment

You're going to need a ready means to cook food and boil water if your power is out. If you don't already own a BBQ grill then I strongly suggest you purchase a small propane grill, one that can be carried in a single hand. (Note: you can also find small grills that serve this purpose quite well in the camping section.)

You will also need the appropriate equipment for using your BBQ grill including propane tanks, grill utensils (i.e., tongs, spatula, cleaning brush), as well as a propane extension to connect large bottles of propane to a small grill, if necessary.

### Propane Tank

You certainly want enough propane to see you through any considerable disaster. Know that **you could very well be cooking three meals, boiling water, and even supplementing your heat every day for weeks on end.** You can go through propane swiftly at this rate.

Since everyone's mileage will vary, it is difficult to say how much propane this would be. Therefore, I would suggest buying at least two large (twenty pound) bottles of propane while also taking advantage of any and all means of alternative cooking and water disinfection possible in order to conserve propane usage.

## Shovel, Large

You never know where, when, or why you need to be digging in dirt, but I'm willing to bet that you'll find a reason sooner or later in a lengthy disaster scenario. (A fairly obvious reason would include burying fecal waste.) Buy a good quality pointed digging shovel with a fiberglass handle if possible. If you can buy one that has a very pronounced step (the part of the shovel that bends over for you to "step" on when digging) you'll save your feet a lot of aches and pains later.

## Trash Cans, 32 Gallon or Larger

Large trash barrels can serve many purposes, including a place to store all of this stuff you've been buying, a safe way to store all of your waste materials during a disaster, and as a way to collect rainwater. I keep a few around for these very reasons myself.

While trash barrels are definitely not FDA-approved for this purpose and **should NOT be used for long term water (or food) storage**, they can prove to be a ready means of collecting rainwater temporarily. Again, trash barrels—as well as trash bags—do contain unwanted chemicals you don't want in your drinking water, so **this advice is for an ONLY IF YOU HAD TO occasion.**

Additionally, if you're going to use trash barrels for this purpose then clean them out very well with a bleach solution as soon as you buy them and keep the lid on thereafter. And, be sure to further sterilize your water as best you can by boiling, with bleach, or some other method.

In fact, the best storage containers (even short term) are those that are FDA-approved to be safe for drinking water because they will not leech chemicals.

### [Optional] Chainsaw, Gas-Powered

Chainsaws make short work of wood. If things are bad enough then you could be felling trees and cutting up branches to stay warm. Or, you could simply be clearing a tree from your driveway. Whatever the reason they're very useful given the right circumstance.

Buy a well-known name brand like Stihl and ensure that it is gas-powered for sure. Definitely purchase the proper safety equipment (including body, hands, and head/face protection) which you'll probably have to get elsewhere. **Chainsaws can be very dangerous in naive hands.** Ensure you know how to use and maintain it.

### [Optional] Fire Logs

Duraflame fire logs are a ready source of prolonged heat and can be a welcomed purchase should nighttime lows drop near or below freezing. If your home has a fireplace, purchase a few boxes. This should be enough to see you through a few nights of cold weather. If you don't own a fireplace, you can probably skip it.

### [Optional] Insecticide, Pre-mixed

Like I mentioned previously in the Pest Control section, you need to be able to control pests with the expectation that they will be much more of a problem after a disaster than they were beforehand.

Insecticides are used to mass control insects around the perimeter of your home, both inside and out. You'll want a broad-spectrum insecticide that is already pre-mixed (it doesn't require mixing with water) so that you're ready to spray and won't require water to dilute it. If you're going to spray inside your home then be sure it is labeled for that purpose.



### [Optional] Snow Shovel

If you live in snow country then this item is obvious. Buy a sturdy, lightweight shovel. If you are accustomed to using a snow blower, that's fine; although you should stock enough fuel and oil to keep it running. As a backup plan, however, I would still keep a snow shovel around.

## Home Improvement

### General Hardware



This section encompasses several items that any home should have regardless of a pending disaster or not, including smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. Other items such as window and door alarms may prove useful in securing your home as well, especially post-disaster.

### Carbon Monoxide Detector, Battery-Operated

A simple carbon monoxide (CO) detector performs one task and does it very well: **the detection of deadly CO gas, which is odorless, colorless, tasteless... and deadly.** CO can be generated by anything that burns fuel such as a fireplace, BBQ grill, or even a gas kitchen range.

Given that your power will probably be out **you must anticipate that you will be doing unusual things** to keep warm and cook your food. You could be doing dangerous things and not even know it (such as cooking on a BBQ grill indoors).

Therefore, **you must have a means of detecting CO before it becomes deadly.** Purchase at least one detector per level of your home and be sure you have enough batteries for them to function without home electricity for weeks on end. A well known name brand such as Kidde is recommended.

## Duct Tape

It seemed the only thing MacGyver needed to fix nearly anything was duct tape. Unfortunately, you and I need a bit more than that. In any case, duct tape is marvelous stuff. The Mythbusters even created a functioning cannon using duct tape... if that doesn't tell you what it can do then I don't know what will. ☺

Purchase at least one or two rolls of the quality duct tape (not the off-brand stuff) to ensure you get what you paid for.

### ----- Sidebar -----

I've recently read reviews that Gorilla brand tape is superior to "normal" duct tape. I haven't tested that claim on my own yet but it may well be worth checking out.



## Emergency Power Failure Lights

These emergency lights are meant to turn on when the power goes out. Simply plug into an outlet (so they're fully charged) and leave them be. The ones I purchased function as a night light, flashlight, and emergency light all-in-one and are what I suggest you purchase. Place one in each bedroom. Then, if the power goes out, it will turn on like a flashlight so you can see and take immediate action without having to search for a flashlight.

## Epoxy, General Purpose

Epoxies are like multi-purpose glues on steroids. If you've never used one you're missing out. An epoxy is the result of two parts coming together: a resin and a hardener. When mixed in the correct ratio the bond is very strong.

Some epoxies are very specific in their uses, from metal and concrete to plastic to marine applications. The ones you're interested in are more general in their applications in that they work on a variety of materials. Most epoxies set within several minutes, a few within a minute. The point is that whatever you're trying to bond together you can probably do it with an epoxy.

I would advise you to purchase a general purpose, five-minute epoxy such as those made under the brand name Loctite. The general purpose epoxy packaging usually indicates that it bonds wood, metal, ceramics, glass, tile, and some plastics.

### Fasteners, Assorted (Nails, Screws, Nuts/Bolts, etc)

I'm willing to bet you'll find a reason to need nails and screws to fix something after a disaster (or even beforehand such as to board up windows). Buy common sizes and lengths in bulk and store them for later use. If possible, purchase galvanized fasteners for long-term use outdoors (to avoid rusting). I would also suggest purchasing an assortment of nuts, bolts and washers as well. Undoubtedly, these may be better purchased at your local Home Depot rather than Walmart.

### Fast-Setting Glue (Super Glue)

Super Glue is a fast-setting cyanoacrylate adhesive that is waterproof and is useful for any number of applications where speed is of the essence. You've likely had occasion to use it in the past. Although there are a few surfaces such as glass that cyanoacrylates have difficulty bonding, overall it is a wonderful product for a majority of minor repairs.

## Fire Extinguishers, ABC Style

The **ability to extinguish small house fires is paramount post-disaster** for the simple fact that you may not be able to rely on outside firefighter assistance at all. This could be because they're overwhelmed somewhere else or you just can't contact them due to downed communication lines.

Apart from disaster preparations, **fire extinguishers area a MUST have item for any household**. You'll want a common ABC style, dry chemical, name brand extinguisher such as Kidde. Purchase at least one extinguisher for each level of the home (if not more) focusing on the bedrooms, kitchen, and garage. FYI, I live in a two story home with six extinguishers and I'm still not sure that's enough.

### ----- Sidebar -----

I would caution you to recognize when a fire is just too much to tackle. It's far better to ensure you get yourself and your family out alive rather than to risk your life trying to save a lost cause because "it's your home".

Structures and possessions can be replaced. Sure, a disaster would be a horrible time to lose your home but it's a worse time to lose a life. Battle the fire if it makes sense...get out when it doesn't.



## Flashlights, LED style preferred

Flashlights are essential to post-disaster preparations. **You clearly must be able to see at night when the household lights don't work**. Flashlights are what you need. Many flashlights now use LED bulbs instead of incandescent bulbs, which

increases bulb longevity substantially and reduces battery usage... buy LED flashlights if at all possible.

I prefer sturdy brands like Maglite; the only drawback being that the large flashlights I prefer use D-cell batteries, which goes against the idea of purchasing equipment that uses common AA-cell batteries. Happily, Maglite (as well as any number of other manufacturers) produce LED flashlights that use AA-cell batteries that are bright enough to rival old-style incandescent bulb D-cell flashlights.

Buy at least one flashlight per person, including children. It's hard to have too much lighting. And be sure to have enough batteries to replace those in all flashlights two or three times over.

### Headlamp Flashlight

Headlamp lights should be considered akin to water in the desert... you simply don't want to be without it. Ok, maybe they're not that important. I would argue, nonetheless, that they are so useful you should definitely purchase a headlamp for each adult for one simple reason: **headlamp flashlights allow both of your hands to be free to perform other chores.**

Anybody who has ever held a flashlight under their arm, between their legs, or even in their teeth while attempting to do anything with haste will quickly appreciate this easy to use solution. I've done all of the above a few times and vow never to do that again. Spend a minute picturing a reason for you to use a headlamp now and you'll get the idea.

## Insulating Foam

Insulating foam, such as that made under the brand name Great Stuff, is useful for sealing cracks and filling gaps that would be too large or inaccessible for other products like caulking or weather stripping. I've had occasion to use it many times.

The foam comes in two consistencies: normal expanding foam and minimally expanding foam (usually sold as window and door foam). To give you an idea of the difference, the regular expanding foam roughly doubles in size while it expands and cures, while the minimally expanding foam is basically what you see is what you get.

### ----- Sidebar -----

I've recently seen super expanding foam available as well, but haven't tried it.

### -----

Expanding foam is fairly easy to work with and cures within twenty-four hours. After curing it can be cut fairly easily with a utility knife to trim off any excess.

**The only caution I would warn you about is to NOT get it on your skin.** The first time I used it (many years ago) I assumed it was similar to caulking in that I could remove it relatively easily, even when somewhat hardened. Not true! I swear I had some stuck to my fingers for days.

Purchase one or two cans if you know your house needs weatherproofing. Even if your home doesn't need repair now you never know when it could.

## Multi-Purpose Glue

Like the fast-setting glue described earlier, multi-purpose glue is useful for bonding a variety of materials together. The bond is expected to be stronger than the aforementioned fast-setting glue because you must wait several hours (usually 24 hours) for the bond to fully cure. One large bottle of Gorilla Glue, for instance, should last years. Just ensure the cap stays on good and tight so it doesn't dry out.

## Plastic Sheeting

Plastics are a highly versatile product. Plastic sheeting that you can purchase in large 25, 50, and 100 foot rolls can be used for any purpose where you want to protect an area from wind or rain such as temporarily patching a hole in your roof, mending a broken window, keeping firewood dry, and so on.

### ----- Sidebar -----

Plastic sheeting is also recommended for sheltering in place from biological or chemical attacks.

-----

Whatever you do, **purchase the thicker four (and preferably six) mil thick sheeting for durability**. Do not waste your money, time, and effort using the thin one mil (or less) thick plastic drop cloth style sheets you would use for painting a room. They're simply not durable enough for any purpose where you're battling the elements. Also, look for rolls that are ten feet wide for versatility.

Buy at least one or two rolls (depending on the length of the rolls you purchase) to ensure you have enough sheeting to deal with whatever you need to get through.



## Smoke Alarms, Battery-Operated

**Smoke alarms, like fire extinguishers, are another **MUST** have item for all households regardless of disaster preparations or not.** Ensure they are battery-operated name brand alarms such as Kidde. Buy at least one per level of your home focusing on bedrooms, hallways outside of bedrooms, and the kitchen.

FYI, although my home has pre-installed smoke alarms in order to meet local fire codes (yours does too), I choose to add additional battery-operated alarms to each bedroom, the hallway outside our bedrooms, downstairs in our main living area, as well as in the kitchen. **They're that important.** And be sure to change the batteries at least once a year if not every six months.

## Strike-on-Box Matches

**The ability to start a fire cannot be overstated.** You need it to cook food, keep warm, ward off bugs, and generally improve your mood. Matches are cheap now and readily available. Buy at least one or two boxes of matches.

Although you might feel that one box would suffice simply because it has hundreds of matches, anyone who has started a fire under less than optimal conditions (which is all the time by the way) will tell you that you can easily go through a dozen or more matches trying to light a single fire. You will run through your match supply very quickly doing this. Keep your matches dry and they should last years.

## Tarp, General Purpose

General purpose rip-stop tarps are similar to plastic sheeting in that their main purpose is to keep wind and rain off of something. In addition, tarps have the

added benefit of being more durable and more easily adaptable to a situation because they can be tied or anchored using their built-in eyelets.

### ----- Sidebar -----

Lightweight backpackers are sometimes known for packing a good quality tarp rather than a tent in order to save on weight and space because it can easily function as a make-shift tent.

-----

Purchase two or more tarps that are at least 9' x 12' and preferably larger.

### Utility Rope/Twine, Assorted Sizes

**Rope can be one of the most useful supplies to have for a variety of reasons** the most obvious of which is tying up or tying down nearly anything. There are always reasons to have more. Purchase rope in an assortment of sizes from twine to half inch thickness or more. Rope should be nylon or a nylon blend if possible. Lengths should be as much as you can manage... I'm not kidding.

### Window/Door Alarms

You never know when something horrible like a home invasion or burglary might occur. In a disaster scenario you should expect the unexpected and plan for the worst. Alarms help you do this by giving you even a few seconds extra warning.

Some alarms simply emit a loud noise when the window or door is open, others if the window glass is broken. I prefer to use them on exterior windows in rooms that are often unoccupied such as spare bedrooms. You can also use them on doors when set to chime mode to alert you that a door has been opened... a feature that

could prove useful for keeping tabs on meandering young children (or teenagers) in everyday life.

I would suggest that you use one on each exterior window of any normally unoccupied rooms. You should also use them on exterior doors in locations such as basements or areas normally unoccupied.

### Wire/Zip Ties, Assorted Sizes

Similar to rope, you can't seem to have enough of these handy wire ties. I use them for everything. Since they're cheap I recommend you stock up. Buy an assortment of sizes from small four inches in length to eight inches in length or longer.

Typical pack sizes are 100 or more.

### [Optional] Caulk Gun and Caulking

Caulking is similar to glue but much more durable. There are a variety of applications and colors to choose from, however, there is only one type of caulking I would bother with stocking for a disaster situation: a general purpose adhesive such as Liquid Nails.

From general home repair to weatherproofing, you'll find many uses for it. I would prefer that it is exterior grade so that it is not only waterproof but very durable. Purchase at least one or two tubes and a caulking gun to go with them.

### [Optional] Cheesecloth

The main reason for storing cheesecloth is to prefilter dirty water. While you can certainly use other items for this purpose (coffee filters or an old clean cloth t-shirt

come to mind) there is something about cheesecloth that just works well. If you run across it then purchase two or three packs for this purpose alone.

### [Optional] Clothesline, Clothespins

Although I'm not expecting you—actually I would discourage you—to do laundry after a disaster, you may have reason to dry clothes that have become wet from outdoor activity. Despite the fact that you can certainly drape clothes over a chair, this may not be the best option.

You'll want a means to dry your clothing as efficiently as possible without your fantastic dryer. Do what your not-so-distant ancestors did and use the wind to your advantage by hanging up your clothes on a clothesline.

Although a sturdy rope would suffice if a clothesline is unavailable, you may find that a clothesline is particularly suited for this purpose. In addition, you'll want plenty of clothespins to go along with it. If available you'll also want a clothesline tensioner in order to take the slack out of your clothesline.

### [Optional] Door Security Bar

A door security bar is a device that is meant to prevent a door from being kicked in by malevolent individuals. Consider purchasing one security bar (such as those made by Master Lock) for each exterior door.

While a security bar will beef up the security of your door at your doorknob, **you need to consider the opposite side of your door as well**, namely the hinges.

Remove a screw from one hinge and you'll probably see a short half-inch screw (among about two dozen others) holding your door in place. I would suggest that you need to replace these screws with longer ones of at least three inches in length so that the screws adequately penetrate the door frame and contact the 2 x 4. Shorter one and one-half inch screws would suffice for securing the hinges to door.

### [Optional] Door Chain

A door security chain won't stop a determined individual from knocking down your front door. However, it should stop someone from easily pushing their way through as you answer the door. As such, this item is best used in everyday life.

Look for one that includes a heavy-duty chain or a swinging bar. You might also consider using longer wood screws to secure the mount to the door frame, since you want the screws to contact the 2x4 behind the door frame molding for added strength. Install the security chain up high so that small children cannot access it. And then be sure to use it... always!

### [Optional] Electrical Tape

Black vinyl electrical tape is uniquely designed for use with electrical connections so long as it is certified for use as electrical tape. In fact, the color of the electrical tape indicates what usages it can be applied to. Suffice it to say that for normal people like me the black electrical tape is just fine. If you anticipate needing to perform any minor electrical repairs then you may want to have some electrical tape around for this purpose.

### [Optional] Exterior Thermometer

A basic exterior thermometer can be used to monitor more than just the temperature outside. It can be used to monitor the temperature in your refrigerator or freezer, a cooler, or even the temperature inside your home. Being able to keep track of your refrigerator or cooler temperatures, for instance, would help you to know precisely when food is bad rather than by guessing, sniffing, or tasting it.

#### ----- Sidebar -----

You could even get sophisticated and buy a wireless unit. Place the transmitting (temperature-sensing) unit inside your refrigerator and keep the receiving (display) unit on a tabletop. Doing so would allow you to avoid opening the refrigerator to check the temperature and thereby avoid wasting precious cool air.

### [Optional] Heavy-duty Chain and Padlock

A heavy-duty chain can be used to secure gates, doors, and even a portable generator from being stolen. Include a sturdy padlock and you'll be all set. I would hint that the padlock be a combination lock because you can easily lose a key. (Remember to write down the combination and place it somewhere safe if you forget the combination, now...if only I can remember where I placed that note.)

### [Optional] Lubricant

While you can use duct tape to put things together, a multi-purpose lubricant spray, such as WD-40, is used to make things come apart. Sprays such as this seem to last indefinitely so there is no harm in buying a can before you find a need for it.

Whether it's to loosen stuck bolts or quiet a squeaky door hinge, WD-40 is a very useful product.

### ----- Sidebar -----

WD-40 is named literary for “water displacement 40th attempt”.

**WD-40 can be used for more than just lubrication.** In fact, it can be used to prevent corrosion, to remove sticky residues such as leftover adhesive from labels or tape, or to remove bug splatter from your windshield. It's definitely a multi-purpose spray.

### [Optional] Step Ladder, 6' or larger

A sturdy step ladder is useful for safely accessing otherwise inaccessible locations around your home such as your rooftop or high tree branches. Although you can certainly pile up enough items to get to where you need to get, it's not very safe. Use an appropriate step ladder instead. A six foot ladder is usually sufficient to access most rooftops, although you should opt for a larger ladder if possible.

### [Optional] Surge Protector

Surge protectors (a.k.a. “power strips”) are used to protect sensitive electrical equipment such as your computer or television from harmful power surges. Normally this is never a problem; nevertheless, a disaster scenario is a situation where an unwanted power surge is possible.

With the expectation that the electrical company will be attempting to restore your power ASAP you should not expect that it will always happen without incident. It is possible that in attempting to restore power, **your home (and your equipment)**

**could receive a “lethal” power surge** thereby damaging your sensitive electronic equipment.

To prevent this from happening you’ll want to plug your equipment into a surge protector. I would suspect that one or two surge protectors would suffice to protect your most expensive equipment such as a home entertainment center or desktop computer. Alternatively, you could just unplug anything sensitive until the power is properly restored.

### [Optional] Velcro Strapping

Velcro strapping is similar in function to wire ties except that they are reusable. Purchase the type of Velcro that is meant to adhere back upon itself rather than the type that comes separated with sticky backing because the purpose is to be used as a wire tie of sorts.

### [Optional] Weather Stripping

You’ll want to ensure your home is as weatherproof as possible. If your home is abnormally drafty, then purchase some weather stripping and get busy patching those doors and windows.

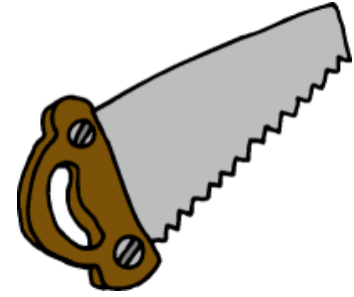
### [Optional] Window Screen

You’re not necessarily interested in purchasing window screen material for fixing broken window screens, although you certainly can. Rather, you want it because it can be used as a very sturdy pre-filter for a variety of applications, especially in combination with rainwater collection activities. You’ll find it much stronger than cheesecloth and more durable for outdoor use. Even a small roll is better than nothing.



## Hand Tools

There are a few hand tools that may prove very useful after a disaster. It is likely that you may very well have many of the tools listed below. If so, then obviously ignore what you already have. Otherwise, I would urge you to buy the few basics I recommend even if you have never wielded a



hammer in your life or know what a staple gun looks like. Remember, if you need a hammer then you need a hammer...your kid's toy bat will not do the trick.

### Basic Tools (Hammer, Screwdrivers, Pliers, Wrench Set)

Tools such as a hammer, screwdrivers, pliers and wrenches make some basic tasks doable. Without them you're usually up a creek without a paddle. **If you don't already own these basic tools then by all means get them.**

You don't need to spend a ton of money on the best equipment if you're not a regular handyman. Just ensure your tools are at least somewhat robust.

For example, purchase a set of wrenches for SAE sizes and one for metric sizes. Purchase several sizes of screwdrivers that include both Phillips and flat head. Buy an adjustable set of pliers. If in doubt, ask your local hardware store employee.

### Handsaw and Hacksaw

You'll want the ability to cut both wood and metal. You'll use a handsaw for wood and a hacksaw for metal. You don't need anything fancy, basic saws will suffice.

Be sure to include additional hacksaw blades as they will dull with repeated use. I would also suggest a pair of clamps to go along with your saws as the act of cutting

often requires a little assistance with holding stuff down so you can cut it properly; quick-clamps work marvelously for this purpose and are actually a suggestion provided in the Home Depot Bonus Report.

## Safety Glasses

Safety is always a top priority. **Safety glasses are a must for anyone who expects to engage in any remotely dangerous post-disaster activities.** Each adult should unquestionably have a pair.

### ----- Sidebar -----

The shatter resistance of safety glasses is rated by anticipated activity. It seems the more you pay the more resistance they will have to shattering. Either that or they're simply more stylish.

-----

Safety glasses can also be used for protecting your eyes from other unwanted encounters such as spittle from a contagious individual. If you're truly concerned about this possibility then a full-blown face mask would be in order.

## Staple Gun and Assorted Staples

You may find the need to quickly put up something like the aforementioned plastic sheeting to cover a broken window before it rains or even for sheltering in place. A staple gun will make this job much faster. Buy an assortment of staples such as 3/8" and 9/16", which should cover most needs; one box of each will be plenty. Be sure that the staples you buy will work with your gun. So long as they're made by the same manufacturer (e.g., Arrow or Stanley) you'll be fine.

## Steel Snips

Metal objects are very difficult to cut quickly or efficiently without a good set of steel snips (a.k.a. “tin snips”) like those made by Fiskars. While you won’t be cutting through a ¼” steel bar with them (that’s what a hacksaw is for) you can use steel snips to cut a variety of other metal objects such as a chain link fence or some sheet metal quickly and efficiently.

You’ll want snips that are about ten inches long or more for ease of use. A multi-purpose, straight-cutting snip is all you’ll probably need. Compound actions snips (a.k.a. “aviation snips”) may be advisable for more leverage, if available.

## Toolbox and Tool Belt

If you buy a lot of tools you’re going to need a place to store them. A toolbox is made for this purpose. Buy a large, sturdy toolbox and never buy another.

Likewise, a tool belt may be beneficial so you don’t have to make a dozen trips back and forth to your toolbox because you forgot one thing or another.

## Work Gloves

**A good-fitting pair of work gloves is highly recommended for anyone expected to be performing laborious work outdoors.** In a disaster this could be anything from sifting through debris to digging a hole. Gloves help to protect your hands from any number of problems such as being accidentally cut, blisters, or just getting dirty. Form-fitting, leather-palmed gloves are preferred, which you’ll probably need to get from Home Depot. Ensure each adult has a pair.

### [Optional] Bolt Cutters

The purpose of bolt cutters is similar to steel snips only on a larger scale. Used to cut thick pieces of steel such as padlocks, bolt cutters have their place but are likely not essential for most survival situations. If you do choose to purchase bolt cutters then spend the money and get a set that is at least 24” long and preferably 36” long for ease of use.

### [Optional] Plumbers Torch Kit

The plumber’s torch kit has one purpose that I’m aware of...to mend or install copper pipes. Unless you expect the need to fix broken water pipes then this is probably not a necessary item. That said I would imagine it is very difficult to fix copper water pipes without one.

### [Optional] Utility Knife

Knives are always useful. Since I would expect that you already have plenty of knives lying around, a utility knife is not necessary. If you do choose to purchase one then be sure it is retractable for safety and buy plenty of extra blades.

### [Optional] Wrecking Bar

A wrecking bar is basically a long piece of forged steel which is bent at the end and is meant for making short work of demolition tasks such as tearing apart, well...nearly anything. Given that a disaster situation may include a significant amount of damaged homes and other structures, a wrecking bar could prove useful. If you choose to purchase one then spend the money and buy one that is at least 24” long and preferably 36” long for ease of use.

## Camping Equipment



When people think of survival they often think of camping equipment. There's a good reason for that since camping supplies will enable you to live—even comfortably—in otherwise abnormal circumstances. Grab what you can in this area before everyone else does.

## Camp Shower

I'm sure you've stepped in the shower a bit too soon and been shocked when a blast of cold water hit your body... it can literally take your breath away.

Since we're used to indulging in hot showers and baths you'll want a means to warm your bath water in an extended disaster scenario. While you can certainly heat up water for bathing over a campfire or using your propane stove, I would suspect that you'll want to conserve whatever fuel resources you have for more critical needs such as for drinking or cooking.

The camp shower tackles this very problem and does it via the power of the sun. Simply place water in the bag, hang the bag in direct sunlight, wait a few hours and voila... a warm shower awaits you! Of course, your ability to heat up water is entirely dependent on the amount of sun and surrounding temperature so this may not be a wonderful option in sub-freezing temperatures.

### ----- Sidebar -----

I've seen people recommend using a garden sprayer (painted black to absorb the sun's rays) as a potentially better alternative to a camp shower.

-----

At any rate, I definitely recommend every family purchase at least one camp shower for this very purpose. I would also suggest that you experiment with yours and test water temperature before using it as you can get the water too hot.

### Cooler, 50 quart or larger

If you've ever done an overnight camp trip in the summer then you understand the need for coolers. **If you have a large amount of perishable foods and expect your power to be out for days then a cooler is about your only short term option.** Purchase one that is at least 50 quarts in volume or, if possible, considerably larger. A good quality cooler can keep perishable foods viable for days on end if need be. Oh, and get plenty of ice on your way out the door as well.

### Fixed-Blade Knife

You've heard me say it before: **knives are very useful for a variety of reasons.** Although I assume you already have plenty of knives in your kitchen, a sturdy fixed blade knife for general use is recommended. It doesn't have to be a fancy \$100 knife to still be useful. Buy one for each adult.

### Insect Repellent

If there's anything that can make a good disaster experience go bad, it's bugs! Ok, there's probably a few other reasons as well, but, let's focus on bugs for now.

**Bugs are downright infuriating at times.** Some even carry nasty diseases. They get on everything you don't want them on (including you) and simply don't know what "Shoo!" means. Expect them to be worse in an extended disaster.

Remember, bugs may be a nuisance now but can be a real problem later. Insect repellent will help keep them away from you so that you can concentrate on something else. Consider purchasing at least one bottle per person.

### Insulated Thermos

The insulated thermos (technically called a vacuum bottle) is awesome. While most people will use a thermos to keep beverages such as coffee hot, **I would urge you to buy one for a different reason...to cook with!**

Yes, you can “cook” with one. While you’re not actually burning a fuel to cook your food you can take advantage of the high insulating properties of a vacuum bottle by constituting meals that require hot water. Just add the dry food, pour in an appropriate amount of hot water, stir, seal, and then wait. In doing so you can save precious fuel for later use rather than wasting it to continuously boil water while you cook food.

What can you cook with this? Oatmeal would be an example. You can constitute other foods like rice, packaged soup mixes, gravies, and noodles. I’ve even heard of people making simple vegetable soups in this manner. The only drawback in some cases is that you may need to wait for hours for your food to be fully cooked unlike you would on a stovetop.

Purchase at least one per adult if not one per person. Consider getting a larger one quart Stanley thermos for this purpose, as a smaller half quart thermos will probably not work well for this purpose. If you buy a different thermos brand, be sure it has a wide mouth, large capacity, and is made of stainless steel.

## Iodine Tablets

While bleach will be your main short-term water treatment option, **water is so important that you'll want at least one alternative disinfecting option.** That's where iodine tablets such as those made by Potable Aqua come in handy.

They're great for on-the-go options such as in your bug out kit. Each bottle will only treat about several gallons of water, so, purchase a few bottles if you can.

## Lantern, Battery-Operated

Lanterns are a wonderful means of alternative area lighting. **Compared to flashlights, lanterns are much more suited to replicating life as we know it.**

There are a number of lantern options available, the most common being propane, kerosene, and battery-operated. It used to be that battery-powered lanterns (those with incandescent bulbs and that used large D-cell batteries) were, well... battery hogs. Not anymore. LED battery-powered lanterns are very efficient.

### ----- Sidebar -----

While I'm a big advocate of redundancy, for ease of use and safety concerns (especially with young children) opt for battery-operated LED lanterns.

-----

Additionally, lanterns often function on AA-cell batteries, which can be recharged. From my own experience, I've had a battery-operated lantern for years and I can't even remember when the last time it was that I changed the batteries.

There are drawbacks to battery-operated lanterns. In particular, you'll find that fuel-powered lanterns (such as those that run on propane) can get much brighter and light up a larger area. If money is no option then you might buy both styles.



## Large Tent

You may shudder when I say that even your home can be damaged beyond its usefulness, but it can and does happen. **You may need an alternative shelter.**

While I have a plan in place to live with family or friends if I had to, I also want the ability to shelter while outside if, for whatever reason, we had to.

The large family tent is a ready means to do just that. It doesn't need to be fancy, have five living compartments, eighteen windows, or mood lighting. The tent just needs to keep the rain off your head and wind out of your face. That's it.

I would also encourage you to buy additional ground stakes (I bend one or two beyond repair each time I pitch my tent) as well as a heavy-duty tarp large enough to lay under the entire length and width of the tent in order to reduce ground moisture penetration. Consider a replacement tent pole and seam sealer as well.

## Magnesium Fire Starter

I've stated before that fire is very necessary to survival. Besides matches and lighters, a magnesium fire starter is another means to start fires. One bar should last for many hundreds of fires. While I'm sure you'll get the hang of it eventually, you should consider practicing once or twice so you get the hang of shaving off small pieces of magnesium and then (more importantly) getting a spark to land on them. It's not that easy.

## Rain Poncho, Heavy-duty

Most of civilized society are accustomed to using an umbrella to shed the rain while walking from one sheltered area (such as the car) to another sheltered area (such as a building). Regrettably, disasters have the uncanny knack of forcing us to be out

in the rain doing something that requires both hands, sometimes for hours on end. Rain ponchos are what you'll need to keep yourself dry.

**Even if it's not very cold at all, hypothermia concerns are still very real, especially in windy and wet conditions.** You'll want to protect yourself and your family from this concern as best you can. Buy one heavy-duty rain poncho per person. I would also suggest that you buy at least one full rain suit per adult, which are available at Home Depot.

### Sleeping Bags

Hand-in-hand with a large family tent, you'll want sleeping bags to go with it. Buy quality bags that are rated down to at least zero degrees Fahrenheit if sub-freezing weather is expected in your area. Buy one sleeping bag per person and keep them with your tent supplies so you know where they are. If you can get ground pads to go with your bags, that would be advantageous.

### Water Container, Hard-Sided (6-7 gallon size or larger)

Since water is so critical to life you must have multiple ways to store and transport it. Buckets and jugs are fine; however, a several gallon hard-sided plastic storage container is ideal because it can still be transported by hand and even stored without much thought.

#### ----- Sidebar -----

I have one of these in the trunk of each of my vehicles filled about 90% full in order to keep the container from cracking as the water expands when it freezes.

-----

I suggest you purchase one per adult or simply one per car and store water if you ever need it. They're sturdy and great to have around.

### Waterproof Matches

Matches are always useful. While I suggest that you stock up on strike-on-box matches, waterproof matches have their place as well. Wind and rain have a tendency to put a damper on lighting fires with normal matches. Waterproof matches are designed to counter this problem. Buy one or two boxes for those times where you simply need your matches to work.

### [Optional] Camp Grill Grate

You may find yourself cooking by campfire some nights. You'll want to mimic a BBQ grill as best you can so that you can more easily cook food. A camp grill grate with short legs will help to achieve this end quite well. While you could, alternatively, use your BBQ grate instead, a camp grill will be a bit sturdier option for this purpose.

### [Optional] Cyalume Light/Glow Sticks

Cyalume light sticks are perfect for young children. They are safe to use, last for several hours or more, and are even a fun indulgence for children.

Unfortunately, there are a few drawbacks such as very low levels of light (barely enough to read by) and you can't turn them off once activated.

Fortunately, they're cheap and useful enough that I would still suggest you purchase at least several or more. They're useful for bug out bags and vehicle kits and can be stashed with your other supplies easily.

### [Optional] Dutch Oven

A Dutch oven also allows you to cook over a camp fire. In fact, **it is far more flexible than a simple camp grill grate** in that it allows you to cook any number of soups, boil water, and even bake bread (so I'm told) if you're so inclined. If you potentially see campfire cooking in your future, a Dutch oven is a must buy.

Be aware that this is not just any Dutch oven. It must be cast iron in order to withstand the wear campfire cooking places on the oven. Additionally, it must include a flat (not rounded) lid; the flat lid allows you to place hot coals atop the oven to aid with proper heating of some meals in order to mimic an oven.

Last, I would encourage you to purchase heavy-duty gloves and/or a lid lifter (available online) to safely remove the lid. You might also consider a campfire oven tripod as well as a Dutch oven cookbook, also available online.

### [Optional] Kerosene Lantern and Fuel

Although I prefer the LED battery-powered lanterns for safety concerns, a simple kerosene lantern can prove to be a useful and cost-effective alternative for short-term emergencies. I have a few and suggest you consider them. Stock at least a few bottles of fuel and wicks as well.

### [Optional] Propane Space Heater

The ability to stay warm for even a short period of time could make the difference between a tolerable survival situation and a miserable one. Most of us have no way to do this (beyond clothing) besides lighting something on fire.

A propane space heater could be the answer. **Be sure that it's rated to be safe to use indoors**, which is a requirement for your family's safety.

### ----- Sidebar -----

Depending on the style of heater you purchase, it may only accept the smaller one pound propane bottles. In order to use a larger twenty pound tank you'll need a propane hose extension. Note: this could be considered dangerous by the manufacturer so **ONLY DO THIS WITH CAUTION**.

You'll likely be able to heat a small area for upwards of 50 hours or more on a twenty pound propane tank. If you ration the heat and use it wisely, this could be stretched to a week or more.

### [Optional] Water Container, Collapsible, 5-gallon

A collapsible five-gallon water container is essentially the same idea as the hard-sided water container discussed previously except that it is made with softer plastic so that it can be collapsed down and stored easily when not in use.

Because the plastic is soft, this container is more difficult to carry when filled to capacity, although it is manageable. Again, because water is so important I would recommend you purchase one per adult and store them if you ever needed them.

## Other Items

The following departments have so few recommended items that they are relegated to the “other” category. At any rate, you may have a very necessary need for them so I wouldn’t just skip these departments without ensuring you already have whatever you may still need.

### Home & Office

Grab a few writing supplies and you’re off again. No need to stock up on paper clips, printer paper, or a new wastebasket.



### Sharpie Markers

**Permanent markers are often better than pens or pencils** in some situations.

They can write on nearly anything and are very difficult to remove, which means that rain water won’t easily wash it away and it cannot be erased accidentally.

These facts make sharpie markers a useful item to keep around as you never know what you’ll need to write on. Buy a pack of two or more.

### Writing Supplies (Notepads and Pens)

Even though sharpie markers are more versatile, you’ll still want the ability to write as you normally would. Pens, pencils, and notepads are good to have around.

These supplies are cheap now. Consider purchasing a pack or two of pens and pencils as well as a few notebooks so you have plenty on hand.

## [Optional] Fire Safe

A fire safe should be a strong consideration for any household in spite of disaster preparedness discussions or not. Fire can happen at any time. You need to prepare as best you can for such a disaster, and part of that preparation means a fire safe.

**Store any number of difficult to replace documents inside** such as deeds, titles, birth certificates, marriage certificates, wills... you name it. **A comprehensive household inventory list is recommended for everyone to store.** I would also urge you to store any important computer documents on a USB drive or CD/DVD rewritable disc and store that in your fire safe as well. You might include spare keys for your vehicles also. Memorabilia such as family pictures are fair game too.

Use your limited space wisely and think about that information which is most difficult to replace or might be useful to you to rebuild your life if need be. Please also understand that the basic fire safes you're likely to find at Walmart are NOT burglar-proof. In fact, they're far from it. As such, I wouldn't keep any expensive valuables in one.

## Sports & Fitness



The sports and fitness section is another grab-and-go area. No need for a new Pilates mat or Tae-Bo workout DVD. Stop here for just a few items and hurry on to the next spot.

## Bicycle Pump (with gauge)

As you would expect, a bicycle pump with Schrader valve is certainly useful for inflating a bicycle tire. You might not realize, however, that **you can use a bicycle pump to inflate a vehicle tire as well.**

You'll surely get a workout inflating just one tire but it can be done... I've done it several times simply because I didn't want to pay the local gas station seventy-five cents to use their air compressor. Since it requires no outside power source (besides you) it makes a useful addition to any home preparedness kit.

### ----- Sidebar -----

A better alternative would be a bicycle-style tire pump found in the automotive section; the one I found is rated up to 70 PSI. You might also consider a 12-volt DC pump you can plug into your vehicle's auxiliary outlet.

## Water Bottles

Inexpensive sports water bottles can be handy to have around. Besides water storage, you can use them for specific personal hygiene actions in a pinch (as the Europeans would use a bidet), fill them with warm water and use them as a mini personal heater, as convenient weights when filled with wet sand/dirt, or whatever your imagination dreams up.

Since they're cheap buy at least one per person and mark them with your sharpie markers in order to denote which bottle belongs to whom or for what reason it exists; doing so will help to minimize disease transmission and confusion.



## [Optional] Mountain Bicycles

You may need an alternative transportation option beyond your vehicle for reasons such as a lack of gasoline, breakdowns, or perhaps your vehicles were damaged by the disaster. **Besides walking, you'll have little option other than bicycles.**

If it makes sense, then purchase one mountain bicycle per adult (or one per person if you have children old enough to ride one). Purchase at least one spare inner tube per bicycle as well as a small tire hand-pump to go with it.

You'll also want to know some basic bicycle maintenance as well. Get a book or look it up on the internet. Buy a well known brand such as Schwinn to more easily find replacement parts down the road.

## Toys

While not a primary concern immediately after disaster, **boredom can set in very quickly**. This is particularly true with children. You must have the ability to counter such boredom especially in any lengthy disaster scenario. Games, books, and puzzles are all recommended; be sure you have plenty of each on hand.



## Board Games

A family fun night for all involved, board games can keep otherwise fidgety minds occupied for hours. I suggest an age-appropriate selection of at least two board games for adults and three or more for children.

## Puzzles (Jigsaw, Crosswords, etc)

Puzzles are also an excellent way to keep occupied and pass the time. Stock an assortment of puzzles with particular attention to whatever you and your family would enjoy be it crosswords, Sudoku, jigsaw puzzles, and so on.

## [Optional] Books/Novels

Fictional books are a tried and true method of long-lasting entertainment. Keep old books you enjoyed reading just in case you find the need to read them again.

## [Optional] Coloring Books and Crayons

Young children need more stimulus than just games. Allowing them the simple pleasure of coloring a picture once or twice a day can be both time-passing for child and day-brightening for parent.

## Baby



The baby and infant area will be a critical stop if you have young children still in diapers. Even if you don't, there is one item, electrolytes, which may prove useful to you in any case. Stop in or skip it, the choice is yours.

## Electrolytes

If somebody is very dehydrated (such as from diarrhea) you'll need more than just water to re-hydrate them. Besides water, the body also loses minerals, in particular, sodium. You'll want to replace these lost electrolytes ASAP. Although formulated for children, Pedialyte works great for adults also. Buy several bottles.

## ----- Sidebar -----

While you can mix your own rehydration formula (one recipe was suggested previously), store-bought brands such as Pedialyte take the guesswork out of the equation by providing a well-balanced solution with the proper amount of water, minerals, and sweeteners.

### [If Necessary] Infant and Toddler-Specific Items

Again, I won't insult your intelligence and explain why you would need these items for your infant or toddler. The only advice I would still want to mention is that you **purchase enough diapers, wet wipes, and food to last for two or three weeks at minimum**. While adults can function for days and longer without having their needs met, young children and infants simply cannot.

Here's the list: baby blanket, baby bottle and liners, diaper rash ointment, disposable diapers, food (formula or baby food), pacifier, wet wipes.

### Pets

If you have a dog or cat then you cannot and should not skip the pets area. Your pets need almost as much care as children do. Ensure you have the appropriate supplies and food to take care of them, even in a disaster.



### [If Necessary] Cat Litter; 1-2 bags

Besides the obvious use in a litter box, cat litter can also be used to control odors in a make-shift potty. If you choose to build a porta-potty using a five-gallon homer

bucket, then I would also purchase one or two bags of cat litter as well. Note: If you're buying cat litter for a pet, then purchase liners as well.

### [If Necessary] Dog Waste Bags

You'll need to be able to deal with pet waste, especially if your pet must stay indoors for days or weeks. Dog waste bags provide a means of handling waste without contaminating yourself. Of course, you'll also need to consider how to confine and control your pet's waste; potty training pads may be an option.

### [If Necessary] Leash and Collar

If you had to bug out you will need to be able to control your pet. This is a particular concern if you end up at a public shelter of some sort. Many shelters do not allow pets unless they are required to do so by law such as with Seeing Eye dogs. As such, **you need to know where you can go with your pet before you must evacuate.** If you don't already own a suitable leash and collar, buy one set per pet.

### [If Necessary] Pet Carrier

Sometimes a pet carrier is the way to go, particularly with cat owners. (I've seen leashed cats in the past... it's not an advisable option!) I suggest one appropriately sized carrier per pet. If you have large dogs then leashes would suffice.

### [If Necessary] Pet Food

You need to consider your pet's food needs every bit as much as yours. Purchase two or three weeks of food for each pet.

## [If Necessary] Toys

Pets need entertainment and stimulus too. Purchase your pet's favorite toys—dog bones, balls and cat nip come to mind—and store them with your disaster supplies for later use.

## **Kitchen & Dining**



The kitchen and dining section offer a few items that may prove useful to you in your time of need. I would suggest storing these few items for everyday use regardless of disaster preparedness.

## Manual Can Opener

Don't expect your electric can opener to work when you need it to. **You must have a backup option or risk spending some frustrating time and wasted food** opening your canned foods with a knife. It's not easy or entertaining. (Ok, maybe a little entertaining.) Buy a cheap manual can opener and stash with your other disaster supplies just in case you need it.

## Tea Kettle

A tea kettle makes boiling water considerably faster than in an open pot. I recommend every household purchase one even if they don't expect to use it everyday. Of course, you could use a pot and lid **but the tea kettle is expected to be used for only one purpose...to boil water.**

### [Optional] Cast Iron Pan

Another option for campfire cooking is a simple cast iron pan. While not as versatile as a Dutch oven—it's not nearly as deep and does not include a lid—the cast iron pan does have benefits beyond a grill grate; In particular you'll find it more appealing for cooking small foods that would fall through the grate such as cut vegetables. Consider purchasing one if you have the inclination.

### [Optional] Coffee Filters

Coffee filters, like Cheesecloth or a simple clean cotton shirt, can be used to pre-filter dirty or cloudy water before further treatment, such as by boiling or bleach. If you're a coffee-drinker anyway, storing an additional one or two packs of coffee filters merely for this purpose would be a good idea.

### [Optional] Dish Towels

Dish towels are easy to dirty up. From general cleaning to drying dishes to wiping your hands, you'll want plenty of them. On the other hand, given that laundry would be a challenge without your washing machine, I would be more inclined to purchase dozens of paper towel rolls before I would dish towels for a disaster.

### [Optional] Kitchen Knife

I would assume that you have plenty of kitchen knives. As such, there is little reason to purchase another unless you don't own a kitchen knife or your knives are remarkably dull and you don't have a means to readily sharpen them.

### [Optional] Oven Thermometer and Timer

For those interested in alternative cooking methods such as with solar cooking, them an oven thermometer will come in handy. Likewise, a trusty oven timer

would prove useful as well given that oven and microwave timers won't be available post-disaster.

### [Optional] Vacuum Food Saver with additional rolls

A vacuum food saver is a neat invention. I'm sure you've seen the commercials on television so I won't go into details. **Believe me that a food saver (like the Tilia sold at Walmart) will come in handy in everyday life.** This can also be true for disaster preparedness as well...if you have time to prepare before an event occurs, that is.

Using a food saver, one can easily extend the life of anything that would be affected by exposure to oxygen. Given that it is akin to plastic wrap, it will also provide a barrier to moisture as well. I particularly like to use mine to remove oxygen from mason jars using the appropriate accessories (sold separately).

### Clothing

If you live in a part of the country that is exposed to even relatively foul weather—that's most of us by the way—then clothing is an important aspect of your preparedness plan. While emphasis is on cold weather gear, a few items listed below would also be handy for hot weather situations as well.



FYI, if you're reading this from Florida, then you can probably skip most of this section...lucky you.

## Gloves or Mittens

**Hands and, particularly fingers, are among the most susceptible body parts to frostbite.** You need to prevent this problem with a good set of insulated gloves or mittens. Every family member should have a pair and they should be kept with your cold-weather jackets so you don't lose them.

## Jacket or Coat

A quality **cold-weather jacket is crucial to sustaining proper core body temperature in foul weather.** If you live in an area where sub-freezing weather is possible then every family member clearly must have one. The jackets should be wind and water resistant if possible; this is especially necessary for those who may be expected to work outdoors.

## Shoes/Boots

Feet and toes are similarly susceptible to frostbite. Additionally, expect that you will be on your feet a lot and in difficult conditions as well. Thus, shoes should be sturdy, comfortable, and waterproof if possible. Each person should have a set. If a quality set of boots is not possible for every member then purchase a comfortable pair of walking shoes (for bugging out) and limit exposure to foul weather.

## Stocking Cap

The general belief is that your head loses more body heat than the rest of your body. While I'm not entirely sure about that, I can say that it makes sense to keep your head warm and otherwise not be exposed to wind and cold. An inexpensive stocking cap will serve this purpose very well. It should preferably be made of wool (or a synthetic material) as cotton is not recommended to wear when wet. Each family member should have one.



### [Optional] Bandana

A bandana is particularly useful in warm weather to keep the sun from beating down on your head and to keep critical moisture from evaporating. They can even function as a make-shift stocking cap or sling. Bandanas are lightweight, versatile, and inexpensive. Although not an essential article of clothing, I suggest each person have one or two stashed away for such purposes.

### [Optional] Hat/Ball Cap

A ball cap will serve the same purpose as a bandana, that is, to limit sun exposure to your head with the added benefit of limiting sunlight on your face. It might also find service in keeping your head and face from getting drenched in a downpour.

### [Optional] Long Underwear

Long underwear (a.k.a. “long johns”) is simply an added layer of clothing put on underneath your other clothing. If you live in extremely cold weather then you probably own a set. If you do live in cold weather but don’t own a pair, you may find that extended trips outdoors in frigid weather will change your mind. Each person should have a pair; synthetic or wool is preferable to cotton materials.

### [Optional] Sunglasses

Sunglasses are obviously useful for keeping the sun out of your eyes and will also function to reduce glare in certain circumstances (e.g., snow blindness). Each adult should consider owning a pair.

### [Optional] Wet Boots/Gaiters

You never knows what you may need to step in or through after a disaster. From floodwaters to general muckiness, you need to keep yourself as dry and clean as

possible. Wet boots and gaiters help to keep you both dry and clean. And since wet boots are a durable plastic they're easily cleaned and disinfected. I suggest you purchase one set per adult who is expected to work outdoors.

## **Crafts**



Don't bother to grab more paint brushes or scrapbooking supplies. Look for one or two items and get a move on. In fact, you can probably completely skip this area of Walmart if you're remarkably short on time.

## **Safety Pins, Assorted Sizes**

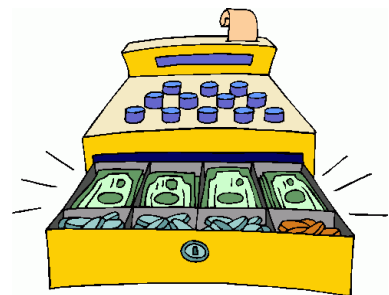
Safety pins are useful for quickly patching a variety of textiles such as ripped clothing, torn bags, or broken backpacking straps. Buy an assortment of safety pins to cover your bases.

## **[Optional] Needle and Thread**

Needle and thread are better suited for mending clothing than safety pins are. One spool of thread will go a long way. If possible, purchase upholstery thread as it is thicker and more durable than regular clothing thread.

## **Front Registers**

So you have a few carts with you and you're ready to get out of here. Not quite yet. A few other items remain to be had even here. Pay attention, you're almost done.



## Basic Lighters

Grab a pack of four or more Bic lighters to ensure you have enough lighters to meet your needs. Even if you were able to grab a few boxes of strike-on-box matches as discussed earlier, you'll still want lighters since they're easier to use. Fire is that important.

## Calling Card, 75 minutes or more

Redundancy is always important. You'll want multiple options to contact family and friends. A calling card may aid you in this endeavor. I recommend each adult carry a prepaid card that has at least 75 minutes of talk time or more with them in everyday life; older children may benefit from having one as well.

## Cash Back, \$200+ cash in assorted small bills and quarters

So long as society didn't completely collapse, cash is king. You can't have enough of it, especially if electronic forms of payment may not function. Yes, that's right, your credit cards, ATM machines, wire transfers, and online banking may be inoperable for some time. It would be wise to stash some cash now just in case you cannot access cash when you truly need it.

**Cash allows you to continue to purchase sundries, gasoline, food and water, and the like. If this is a real emergency, get as much cash as you can.** Then go somewhere else and do it again if your bank card (and bank account) will allow. Attempt to acquire assorted small bills such as \$20 bills and smaller. Quarters are also a useful addition as you may need them for pay for phone calls or to make change.

## Miscellaneous

### Bags of Ice

If you have a cooler and intend to use it for your perishables, they won't last long without a lot of ice. I would purchase several large bags if possible.

#### ----- Sidebar -----

I've seen mixed reviews for using dry ice in place of regular ice for use in a cooler. While I would say it is possible, it is probably not preferable due, in large part, to the inherent safety concerns. Because dry ice is much colder than regular ice it can induce immediate burns to the skin.

#### -----

### Road Maps (local, national)

Most of us are accustomed to getting from point A to point B via only one or two routes. For one reason or another, you may find the need to travel a completely new route. Road maps will help you get there.

You should purchase an up-to-date local city and state map for each vehicle. If you live adjacent to another state then purchase that state map as well. If you're planning a long multi-state trip then a national highway map may come in handy.

**I would suggest you plan at least one—and preferably two or three—alternate routes to any anticipated destination.** It could be that roadways have been damaged by disaster, are impassable due to flood, or blocked by thousands of stranded motorists. Try to choose an off-the-beaten-path route. Doing so can better

your chances of getting to your destination because everyone else is traversing the more obvious routes.

Also understand that what may have been a thirty minute drive normally may now take hours and that **this alternate route may use a lot more gasoline** than you would otherwise consume. You need to prepare for this likelihood by keeping your gas tanks as full as possible and by storing additional gasoline.

### Tote Bins

With the acquisition of all of these new supplies, you're going to need a place to store them, although the aforementioned trash barrels will work. Rather than taking the chance of losing these supplies or otherwise getting them mixed up with your everyday supplies, buy two or three large plastic tote bins in which to store your supplies. (Or use the large trash barrels mentioned previously instead.)

If you anticipate flooding or water damage, consider lining the tote bins in one or two large 33-gallon trash bags before placing your supplies inside as added water protection. Although not completely waterproof, it will serve to reduce water exposure in all but the worst flooding.

## Noticeably-Absent Items

### Fishing Equipment

Some may wonder why I'm not advocating the purchase of any fishing equipment. While fishing is a possibility, for most it will be a waste of time and energy. My reasoning is twofold: (1) most people cannot fish to truthfully feed themselves and their families and (2) everybody else will be out there doing the same thing and either deplete local resources very quickly or seriously hinder your ability to catch anything. (Note: the same can be said for hunting as well.) And, if you were very successful, you may attract attention and get your bounty taken from you anyway.

### Alcohol and Cigarettes

While you may need a stiff drink after a disaster (I probably would), a stockpile of alcohol or cigarettes is not necessary and really only serves to hinder your ability to survive. Keep it where it belongs for now...on the store shelf.

### Candles

Candles are a ready and inexpensive light source. And, although I stock a few myself, **I do not recommend candles in general as they are a HUGE fire hazard.** In fact, **candles are probably the number one reason for household fires after a disaster.** Given that there are safer options available, leave them be.

### Laundry Soap

The advent of the modern day washing machine has drastically changed the way we think about our clothing. In days past we had indoor clothes, outdoor clothes, overalls to keep outdoors clothes from getting too dirty as well as church clothes.

Not any longer. We wear it once and toss it in the washer. After a disaster, we need to think a bit differently.

As such, I have willfully omitted laundry soap from this list for two main reasons: (1) you probably have enough clothes in your closet to see you through a few weeks even if that means you get your top-dollar Armani dress shirt dirty, and (2) you won't have the ability to wash laundry without a washing machine unless you create a way to do it—there are ways to do it, of course. In any case, for these reasons, I wouldn't bother with the laundry.

### Firearms

Guns are not recommended for one HUGE reason: if you don't currently own a firearm then you probably don't know how to handle one. The unintended consequence, therefore, is that you're more of a hazard to yourself and your family than you may realize. Until you get the proper knowledge, training and safety devices, I cannot recommend a firearm. I'm sure there are other reasons, but, this will suffice.

## After Thoughts

Assuming this was your first exposure to such items, I'm sure what we just went through will be a bit overwhelming. That's ok. While you certainly can try to purchase everything at one time, it's not the best plan and will certainly be expensive. I would definitely suggest you start now and work your way through the list as best you can without breaking the bank.

Begin with an adequate food and water supply then move on to first aid supplies. Round it out with hygiene and sanitation supplies and you'll be well on your way to honestly being prepared. Everything else on the list is fair game after that.

Use the tools provided at [www.reThinkSurvival.com](http://www.reThinkSurvival.com) to aid you with your list creation. In particular you can use the "Design Your Emergency Kits Now!" link to create lists for your home, bug out, and vehicles in minutes. In fact, the home kit has been designed to be compatible with everything found in this guide. Use it!

Remember that this isn't the only information you should know. Spend some time reading the Home Depot Bonus Report, watch the videos I provide in the [Video Vault](#), gain a ton of "[How To](#)" Knowledge, and so much more.

When you're ready (and I hope that's sooner rather than later) use the [planning tools](#) I have provided as well. They'll help you prepare your family more than you think. Taking the time to honestly think about your situation will go a long way to ensuring you're ready when disaster strikes.

Make an effort each week to bolster your preparations. You won't be sorry.