

# Preparing for an Emergency

## A focus on water and food

After a disaster such as an earthquake or a flood, it may be some time before you are able to access food and water from outside your home. Water lines may be broken, making your home water supply unsafe. For the safety and comfort of you and your family it's a good idea to plan ahead and have enough food and water stored for at least 3 days (72 hours).



### Steps you can take

Water and food should be part of every Emergency Kit.

#### Water

- | It is recommended that each person have:
  - | 2 Litres (8 cups) for drinking per day; and
  - | 2 Litres (8 cups) for cooking and cleaning per day.

So, for 72 hours, each person should have:

- | 6 Litres (24 cups) for washing; and
- | 6 Litres (24 cups) for cooking and cleaning
- | 12 Litres (48 cups) of water total.
- | Include some easily carried small bottles in case you have to evacuate your home.
- | Commercially bottled water should be replaced every 6-12 months. Bottled water is not a sterile product so should be replaced to help ensure safety.
- | For more information on preparing emergency plans and building a 72-hour emergency kit with food, water, tools and other helpful items, visit:  
[www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/yprprdngsd/yprprdngsd-eng.pdf](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/yprprdngsd/yprprdngsd-eng.pdf) (1.86MB PDF)

#### Food

- | The amount of food you will need in your Emergency Kit depends on the number and needs of your family members. If you stock your kit with foods your family normally eats, and restock the kit as you go, you won't have to worry about wasting food.
- | Choose non-perishable, familiar foods. Familiar foods are comforting in times of stress.
- | Think about the specific foods that each family member needs—for example, infants and those with allergies or medical conditions. Don't forget your pets!
- | Pick foods that are compact and lightweight, and need little or no water to prepare.
- | Make sure you have all the tools and utensils you need to prepare food, including a manual can opener, a safe way of heating food, matches, a pot for cooking, soap to sanitize dishes, and disposable dishes and cutlery, as they will reduce water use because you won't need to clean them.
- | Replace food once a year. Label each food item with the date you added it to your Emergency Kit to help you remember.
- | Since your emergency kit provides food for a short time only, you don't have to aim for perfect nutrition. However, having nutritious meals and snacks will help keep energy levels up and help everyone to feel their best. Choose foods and drinks that are low in salt, when possible, because salt makes you thirsty.
- | The following are suggested foods from each of the four food groups from "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide" at [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide).

## Vegetables and Fruit

- | canned and dried vegetables and fruit
- | juice boxes
- | canned soups and stews

## Grain Products

- | salt-free crackers, ready-to-eat and instant cereals
- | pasta and rice—remember that these need water for cooking

## Milk and Alternatives

- | evaporated and condensed milk
- | skim milk powder
- | UHT milk (milk that has been sterilized at “ultra-high temperatures” making it shelf-stable for greater than 6 months; it does not need to be refrigerated until opened)
- | packaged, ready-to-eat puddings
- | shelf-stable rice and soy beverages

## Meat and Alternatives

- | canned meats and fish
- | canned beans, pork and beans
- | dried beans, peas and lentils - remember that these need water for cooking
- | nuts and seeds, trail mix
- | canned soups and stews
- | peanut butter, other nut or seed butters

## Other

- | honey, jam, oil
- | salt, pepper, sugar
- | instant coffee, tea bags
- | comfort foods such as candy, sweetened cereals, chocolate bars and cookies.



## Additional Resources

"Emergency Preparedness Guides" can help you plan for an emergency by providing information about:

- | Risks specific to your area

- | Developing an emergency plan
- | Preparing an emergency kit (or providing information on where you can buy one).

"Emergency Preparedness Guides" can also help you to know what to do in the case of an actual emergency. Get your "Emergency Preparedness Guide" through:

- | Public Safety Canada: 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232) TTY: 1-800-926-9105 Monday to Friday, 8 am to 8 pm local time Or visit: [www.GetPrepared.ca](http://www.GetPrepared.ca)

*These resources are provided as sources of additional information believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publication and should not be considered an endorsement of any information, service, product or company.*



## Notes

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Dietitian Services at HealthLinkBC (formerly Dial-A-Dietitian), providing free nutrition information and resources for BC residents and health professionals. Go to [www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating) or call 8-1-1 (anywhere in BC). Interpreters are available in over 130 languages.