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Three-day Emergency Food Supply

A Family Food Supply During a Natural Disaster

Most disaster checklists include a recommendation for a three-day food supply for each occupant of the household. Here are some things to keep in mind when you're choosing those foods.

- Choose nonperishable foods that require little or no cooking and no refrigeration.
- Can or jar sizes should be appropriate for one meal with no leftovers. Once opened or prepared, many foods lose their shelf-stable character – and will go bad.
- Select food you like and normally eat. You may need to improve the packaging by placing items in plastic bags to prevent damage from exposure to moisture and water.
- If you don't have a way to boil water when the power is off, do not include instant foods. They will consume your water supply too fast.
- Don't forget baby food, special dietary requirements and food for your pets.
- Buy (and practice using) a hand-cranked can opener. You'll need it to open that can of tuna when the power goes off.
- As you assemble your food and other disaster supplies, keep them in a central location – above potential flood level.



- Store food in the coolest cabinets or pantry away from appliances that produce heat.
- Store food that comes in cardboard boxes, thin plastic or paper in metal, glass or rigid plastic containers to avoid insect and rodent damage.
- Rotate and use food and water every 6-12 months

Shelf-stable Foods and the Food Guide

The amount of food you need depends on your age, gender, physical condition and activity level. The general nutrition guidelines for a three-day supply are based on USDA's MyPyramid recommendations.

Bread Group (6-11 servings daily)

- 18-33 servings a person for three days
- 72-132 servings for three days for a family of four
- Instant oatmeal, dry cereal, bread, crackers, dry bread sticks, pretzels, melba toast, granola bars, rice cakes, popcorn cakes. If you have a source of fresh water and you can bring it to boil, include instant rice and dried soups with noodles.

Vegetable Group (5 servings daily)

- 7.5 cups or 15 servings per person for three days
- 30 cups for a family of four for three days
- Fresh and frozen vegetables from the refrigerator and freezer (use first if you lose electricity), canned vegetables, canned vegetable soups. If you have a source of fresh water and you can bring it to boil, include instant vegetable soups and instant potatoes.

Fruit Group (4 servings daily)

- 6 cups or 12 servings per person for three days
- 24 cups for a family of four for three days
- Fresh fruit and fruit in freezer (use first if you lose electricity), canned fruit, applesauce, dried fruits (raisins, prunes, apricots), canned or bottled fruit juice. If you can boil water, or if you have uninterrupted water supply, include powdered fruit drinks.

Meat Group (5.5 ounces daily)

- 16.5 ounces for per person for three days
- 66 ounces for a family of four for three days
- Fish, chicken, meat from freezer (use first if you lose electricity), canned tuna, canned chicken/turkey, canned meat, canned soup with meat, canned chili (meat or bean), sardines, canned beans, canned ravioli/spaghetti, canned ham/pork, canned stew, meat sticks, nuts, commercially prepared turkey or beef jerky. If you can boil water, include instant soup (meat or bean) and also lentils, canned beans, dry beans, peanut butter that can be stored at room temperature without the fear of spoilage. Use eggs, seafood and ground beef from the refrigerator first if electricity is lost. Then use fish and meat from the freezer.

Milk Group (3 servings daily)

- 9 servings per person for three days
- 36 servings for a family of four for three days
- Fresh milk from refrigerator (use first if you lose electricity), canned evaporated milk, canned pudding, boxed (shelf-stable) milk or soymilk. If you can boil water, or if you have uninterrupted water supply, include powdered milk.

Plan on 1 gallon of water per day, per person, for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene.



Author:

Heli Roy, PhD, RD
(225) 578-4486
hroy@agcenter.lsu.edu

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Louisiana State University Agricultural Center

William B. Richardson, Chancellor
Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station
David J. Boethel, Vice Chancellor and Director
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service

Paul D. Coreil, Vice Chancellor and Director
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