

Preparing for an emergency

The smart thing to do...



Whether it is a natural disaster or a neighbourhood emergency, our food supply could be disrupted. In any situation, it is up to each of us to take care of our needs and those of our families.

We buy insurance for our home, our car and our lives, but something as essential as adequate supplies of food, water and critical items are often overlooked. Please consider building an essential pantry and emergency kit for your household.

Getting ready for an emergency

Emergencies can happen anywhere and any time, and can have a significant impact on people's lives.

Being prepared for an emergency can ensure that you and your family can manage if affected by an emergency such as:

- Bushfire
- Flood
- Influenza Pandemic
- Cyclone
- Storms
- Earthquake
- Utility failure

Emergency incidents like those listed above can affect the supply of essential utilities, including electricity, gas and water, and disrupt the supply of food, groceries and critical items.

This brochure provides you with important information on how to stock your pantry to ensure your household has an adequate supply of food, water and emergency items to cope with a prolonged emergency situation. It also contains a 'pantry list' of suggested supplies.

Stocking your pantry

Most households purchase groceries on a weekly basis, and may also do additional top up shops during the week. But think of what would happen if an emergency incident occurred that prevented access to the shops, for example where injury, illness or road closures may keep you confined at home. Most households would very quickly run out of food, especially if electricity and water supplies were affected.

While many emergencies will only extend over a few days, planning for a 14-day stay at home (possibly without water and electricity) by building and rotating items in your pantry, ensures you are prepared for a wide range of circumstances.

The Pantry list is grouped into the types of food and other essential items that may be required during an extended stay at home. These include:

- Drinks
- Pet food
- Dried and long life food
- Snack food
- Emergency backup power supply
- Baby supplies
- Ready to eat canned/bottled food
- Health supplies
- Other items (such as prescription medications)

Naturally *all* households differ, and you should customise the list to suit the needs of your household.

You should also give special consideration to any family members with special needs, such as babies, young children, pregnant women, the elderly, ill or infirmed.

You can start to build your supplies over time, adding more each time you shop. Regularly check the expiry date/s of your emergency supplies, and consume or replace any items as required.

Be prepared

In addition to ensuring you have an adequate supply of food, water and emergency provisions, there are some other simple steps you can take to prepare for an emergency situation:

- Discuss your plans with family and friends.
- Consider how family members/friends outside your household might cope in an emergency? Would any other family members join your household in an emergency situation (eg parents, grandparents, adult children)? If so, you may need to consider how to include them in your plans.
- Have important phone numbers such as your family doctor, *local* police station, State Emergency Service, fire brigade and utility providers in a prominent place (eg the fridge door).
- Listen to *local* news and get up to date information.

Hygiene

Maintain a high level of hygiene. The last thing you would want if you were confined at home, is for yourself or a family member to become ill.

- Washing and drying your hands properly is one of the best ways of protecting against the spread of germs. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with either soap or an alcohol-based rub. Drying *well* is just as important.
- Use alcohol based wipes to wash your hands and clean surfaces if water is not available.
- The important times for washing and drying hands are before preparing food and eating, and after coughing, sneezing, blowing noses, wiping children's noses, visiting the toilet or looking after sick people.
- Keep your coughs and sneezes covered. Use tissues and put them straight into a covered, lined rubbish bin.
- Distance yourself from sick people to reduce the spread of illnesses.

More information

If you would like information on other actions you can take to prepare for an emergency, you may find the following websites helpful:

www.em.gov.au – Emergency Management Australia (a division of the Attorney-General's Department)

www.redcross.org.au – Australian Red Cross

Available from: afgc.org.au/publications

This brochure has been prepared by the Australian food and grocery sector in the interests of the Australian community.

Emergency pantry list

- This list should only be used as a guide for items that may assist in an emergency situation and should be customised to meet your individual household needs.
- It is suggested that households should hold sufficient supply of food, water and essential items to enable a household to be confined at home for up to 14 days.
- Food supplies should be continually used and replenished.
- Ensure food is rotated, and use-by dates are checked regularly.

Managing at home

If you do find yourself and your family in a situation where you are confined, or choose to be confined at home during or following an emergency, there are several things you should consider to ensure you manage your supply of food in the best possible way.

These include:

- If the power is out, use refrigerated/frozen food products first.
 - Refrigerated foods will remain safe for up to 4 hours after a power failure.
 - Frozen foods will remain safe for up to 1 day after a power failure.
 - Keeping the refrigerator/freezer door closed as much as possible may keep food safer for longer, however a thermometer should be used to ensure food has not exceeded 6°C.
 - Freshly cooked products stored at room temperature (ie not in the fridge) will remain safe for up to 4 hours after cooking.
- Consume other perishable products (eg fresh fruit and vegetables, bread) before consuming long life products.
- When purchasing products for your pantry, aim for ready-to-eat products that do not require cooking (in case gas or electricity supply is disrupted).
- Ration food/water supplies based on how long you expect to be confined at home.

Recommended option	Household daily consumption	Total quantity for 14 days
Ready to eat canned/bottled food		
Meat		
Fish		
Fruit		
Juice		
Vegetables		
Soup		
Pasta sauce		
Dried and long life food		
Ready-to-eat meals		
Breakfast cereal		
Flour/bread		
Milk powder/UHT milk		
Soup mix		
Dried vegetables		
Rice and pasta		
Long life cheeses		
Tea/coffee/drinking chocolate		
Sugar		
Snack food		
Dried fruits		
Nuts		
Biscuits		
Spreads		
Crackers		
Snack bars		
Drinks		
Bottled water (3 Litres person per day)		
Water sterilising tablets		
Concentrated juices/sports drinks		
Baby supplies		
Baby food/baby formula		
Nappies and wipes		
Pet food		
Pet food (canned/dry)		
Toiletries/cleaning products		
Toilet rolls		
Soap and shampoo		
Feminine hygiene products		
Rubbish bags		
Tissues and paper towels		
House and laundry cleaning/disinfectant		
Emergency power supply backup		
Batteries		
Portable Radio		
Manual Can Opener		
Torch, candles and matches		
Health supplies		
First aid kit		
Adult and children analgesics/pain killers		
Face masks		
Protective gloves		
Thermometer		
Alcohol based handwash/gels/wipes		
Other items		
Prescribed medications		
Other preferred household supplies		