**Emergency Essentials Every Family Should Have** by Linda Loosli

When you’re unprepared for a disaster that strikes unexpectedly, your family’s basic needs and well-being can be in jeopardy. What if all the grocery stores are closed in your area, or your local emergency shelter turns you away because of total capacity? What will you do then?

That’s why it’s so critical that you gather certain supplies, food, and water as part of your family’s emergency preparedness plan so that your challenging situation doesn’t go from bad to worse. For those of you who have a family, that means thinking about stockpiling larger quantities and having the supplies that a particular family member may require. These are emergency essentials that every family should have. [**Hand Warmers**](https://amzn.to/4fcO1tt)

**Emergency Essentials Every Family Should Have**

**Food -** When stocking up on food, consider these ideas: try to stick with non-perishable food items with a much longer shelf life so that they aren’t out of date when needed.

Also, focus on gathering foods that don’t require refrigeration or don’t necessarily need to be cooked before eating. Your emergency food supply should be able to feed everyone in your family for a minimum of 3 days.

It would be best to consider purchasing food items your family likes. You don’t want to have food for a disaster that no one in the family wants to eat. A few examples of food that would be wise to stock up on:

Canned meat, vegetables, and fruit (don’t forget a manual can opener and utensils and paper goods)

Nuts and dried fruits Fruit and protein bars Beef sticks and jerky

Peanut butter Crackers  Gatorade and Pedialyte

Comfort foods for children (snack cakes, fruit snacks, chips, etc.)

Don’t forget food for your pets and any unique food requirements for certain family members.

**Drinking Water -** Water is arguably your number one essential on this list because you’ll only last a few days without it. When a disaster strikes, there’s the possibility that you’ll only have contaminated drinking water available, or no water for that matter.

The general rule is that an individual needs an average of one gallon of water daily for drinking and personal sanitation. Be sure to gather at least a 3-day water supply for each person, so if you have four people in your family, that’s a minimum of 12 gallons of water.

I’ve always told my readers that we need four gallons per person daily. I get thirsty just thinking about only one gallon a day. So, for a three-day supply for a family of four, you should have 48 gallons stored away. That amount should cover hydration, cooking, personal hygiene, and limited laundry for at least your underwear.

If you’re feeding your infants their infant formula or you happen to have pets, you’ll also need to take that into account and have extra water on hand. If you have to evacuate your home, a portable water filter can be used to filter the water from almost any source. That way, you’ll have fresh and clean water no matter where you are. I like water filtration systems from Big Berkey and PortaWell.

**First Aid Kit -** Don’t be caught in a disaster without a first aid kit, especially if you have younger children. Your family may likely get roughed up a bit, depending on the type of emergency. You’ll need to be able to dress and bandage up various kinds of wounds. In case you missed one of my first aid kit posts, [**First Aid Kits by Linda**](https://www.foodstoragemoms.com/first-aid-kits-need-survive-emergency/)

Your kit should include latex gloves, dressings, adhesive bandages, scissors, tweezers, antibiotic and burn ointments, soap, antibiotic and moist towelettes, an eyewash solution, and a thermometer. You may also want to consider having a splint for broken bones.

**Over The Counter Medications (OTC) -** When you’re under a lot of emotional and physical stress from the trauma that disasters often cause, there’s a good chance that you could get sick. Be sure to stock up on several over-the-counter medications to help with the symptoms. It would be best if you considered some of the following: aspirin, non-aspirin pain relievers, cold medicine, anti-diarrheal, antacids, and laxatives. In case you missed this post, [**35 OTC Medications You Should Store**](https://www.foodstoragemoms.com/35-otc-medications-you-should-store/)

If you or other family members are on prescription medications, you’ll need to have those set aside too, particularly if you have to be evacuated.

**Hand-crank or Battery-powered Radio -** It could be the difference between life and death if you don’t have a radio to stay updated on weather reports and alerts of conditions near your home. Get yourself a hand-crank radio or battery-powered portable radio so that you can know whether to evacuate or take shelter.

It is very helpful if you have a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) capable weather radio. It meets the standards necessary to obtain critical weather information that could guide your decisions.

**Multiple Flashlights with Extra Batteries  -** Don’t be left in the dark following a disaster. Consider stocking up on enough flashlights and extra batteries for each member of your family. I have some solar-powered flashlights that I keep charged by placing them on my windowsills. I recently purchased some battery-powered lanterns so I can light up a larger area. We also have a hand crank unit to recharge the batteries and give us light when the power goes out.

**Wrench, Pliers, and Other Tools -** If you need to turn off your home’s utilities, remember to have a wrench and some extra pliers. It may not be necessary, but it’s best to be prepared, just in case. Having a fully stocked tool chest or portable tool kit provides you with the comfort that you could at least make some minor repairs.

**Duct tape -** Duct tape is handy for any job, whether helping to hold a shelter together or repairing damaged clothing or broken windows. In case you missed this post, [**Duct Tape: Why You Need To Store It**](https://www.foodstoragemoms.com/duct-tape-why-you-need-to-store-it/)

If you need to build a temporary shelter, it doesn’t hurt to have some plastic sheeting to accompany the duct tape.

**Fire Extinguisher  -** A fire extinguisher can help you put out minor fires in your home so that your home doesn’t wind up being a total loss. In case you missed this post, [**Fire: How Can I Prevent One In My Home**](https://www.foodstoragemoms.com/fire-how-can-i-prevent-one-in-my-home/)

[**Fire Blanket**](https://amzn.to/3UF3bPP)

**Additional clothing -** Be sure to have an additional change of clothes prepared and set aside, such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants. If an emergency occurs in winter, sweatshirts, jackets, gloves, snowsuits, and sturdy shoes or boots will all be necessary.

**Extra shoes**

It’s miserable once your shoes are soaking wet and your feet get cold. This is why you should have an extra pair of shoes for each family member. Extra socks are also important, particularly if you must change your shoes due to moisture.

**Blankets -** You can never have too many blankets, especially when your family tries to stay warm after the power has gone out.[**Here are 6**](https://www.foodstoragemoms.com/6-reasons-store-blankets/)[**Reasons To Store Blankets For Any Emergency**](https://www.foodstoragemoms.com/6-reasons-store-blankets/). I’d keep extra quilts and warm blankets for each member of the family.

Depending on the space available, consider having a sleeping bag for each family member. It can provide extra warmth when needed, particularly at night for sleeping.

If you have to go outside in bad weather, having some rain gear for the adults is important.

**Whistle -** You may need to be rescued from your home by emergency crews, but you may not have enough strength left for you to be heard if you try to scream or yell out. This is why a whistle is so critical for you to have since the sound carries such a long distance. I have several of these [**Whistles for Emergencies.**](https://amzn.to/36NIed7)

**Heat -** Depending on where you live, please check out items that would be safe for heating your home. I live in the desert, and I’m going to use blankets—lots of blankets. It’s hard if you live where fireplaces and wood-burning stoves are not allowed. For the first 40 years of my marriage to Mark, we always had a fireplace with a wood-burning stove or insert. Our new home doesn’t have a fireplace, and I miss that option to help stay warm.

**Important Family Documents -** In many disasters, we are directed to evacuate even when we’d rather shelter in place. An evacuation scenario means things are getting pretty bad and you and your property are at risk. You never know what condition you’ll find your home in when you return. That’s why I tell my readers to put together a binder with copies of all the important documents relating to their family. That should include birth certificates, trust deeds, your will, divorce decrees, identification papers, limited bank and investment information, and critical medical information.

**Additional Items Depending On Your Family’s Needs  -** A vast majority of all the emergency supplies and essentials that every family should stock up on will look fairly similar, but there will certainly be several differences. That’s because every family is unique from one another and has different needs. What works for one family makes entirely little sense for another. These are several other emergency essentials that you should consider stocking up on in your emergency kit if they relate to you and your family:

Prescriptions and medications (rotate periodically)

Respirator/Nebulizer/Inhalers and a backup power source like Goal Zero to keep them running

Other Essential medical supplies (blood pressure and glucose monitoring equipment)

Glasses, Contacts, and Solution

Cell phone chargers and walkie-talkies for neighborhood communication in case cell service is down

Personal hygiene items and feminine products, along with hand sanitizer

Diapers, wipes, and baby formula  Baby food Dog or cat food Cat litter

You need additional water for your pets based on their weight: one ounce of water per pound (weight of the pet) each day. **So, if your dog weighs ten pounds, you need ten ounces of water each day**.