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**A POTPOURRI OF PREPAREDNESS TIPS**

 **From Gemie Martin**

**GOOD SOURCES OF INFORMATION:**

The internet: [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org) . This is a Church Website. Visit it to find a wealth of information on preparedness.

Essentials of Home Production and Storage: (Brown booklet.) Published and Distributed by the Church. A must-have manual for every family.

Cooking with Food Storage: (Yellow booklet) Put out by the Carrollton, Texas Cannery, has recipes using the items available at the Dry-pack cannery facility.

**WHAT TO STORE:**

We are asked by our church leaders to “Build a small supply [3 months] of food that is part of your normal, daily diet.” (See the Family Home Storage pamphlet “All is Safely Gathered In.”) When this is accomplished, we are encouraged to extend our food storage to include longer term storage items. The Church cannery has a starter kit. It contains: 1 can red wheat, 1 can white wheat, 1 can flour, 1 can rice, 1 can quick oats, and 1 can pinto beans.

**WHERE TO STORE:**

Ideal storage is in a cool, dry, dark place. If you must store in another place, rotate more often. Sugar and salt store fine in the garage as long as they are kept in containers where moisture and pests (in the case of sugar) cannot enter. For everything else make space in the house. Consider elevating the beds in your home to increase the storage space there. Create space by adding shelves. Move nonfood storage to the garage in order to make space for food inside the home. Put a plywood table round atop stacked food storage. Add a floor-length table cloth and you have a functional end table in your living room or bed room. Get creative.

**FOOD STORAGE CONTAINERS:**

Use only “food grade” containers. Anything else may have harmful chemicals which can leech out into the food or water. Used food containers with the re-cycle code “PETE” on the bottom can be thoroughly cleaned and re-used to store dry foods. You can put in an oxygen absorbing packet (available through your local Family Home Storage Center) to extend the storage life. Make sure the food containers you use have secure seals or lids. I store my yeast in the freezer in a recycled plastic peanut butter jar that has a screw on lid. Put plywood or cardboard between your food storage containers and on top of concrete (which can wick moisture up from the ground).

**WATER:** After the air we breathe, water is the most necessary substance for our survival. The church website suggests that water be stored in containers with the recycle codes “PET’ or “PETE.” Make sure you use only food grade containers to store water. If you are recycling the container, make sure you first sterilize it. The Church website ([www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org)) has instructions on how to do this. Do NOT reuse milk containers. Empty chlorine bleach jugs should NOT be used to store water that will be used for drinking. Pool chemical buckets should NOT be used for food or water storage. We store much of our water in large blue 55 gallon drums which were manufactured for this purpose. These have the advantage of letting no light in so algae cannot grow inside. The Church website ([www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org)) says no treatment of the water is necessary if it comes from a municipal water source. If a non-municipal source (e.g. a spring or well) were used we would add 5 ½ teaspoons of chlorine bleach per 55 gallon drum. We have a pump to stick in the drum so that we can pump the water out if necessary. A siphon (available from Emergency Essentials) will work just as well. The large drums have the disadvantage that they are not easily portable if evacuation were necessary. We store some water in smaller containers and have water filters and treatment methods in our 72 hour kits.

**To purify water**:

 **Heat method**—bring to rolling boil for 5 minutes. In higher elevations where water boils at a lower temperature, boil for a longer time.

 **Chlorine method**: Treat clear water with 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops) of chlorine bleach per gallon. Mix and let stand for 30 minutes. A slight chlorine odor will be detected. Do not store chlorine treated water in a metal container.

 **Iodine method**: Use 4 drops of tincture of iodine (4% solution) per quart let it set 10 minutes if water is at least 56º F; increase to 30 minutes for water that is 34º F. For cloudy water double the amount of iodine. Powdered drink mix may be used to improve the flavor. **Make sure you are not allergic to iodine.**

 **Filters**: There are many excellent filters on the market. Some can reduce or remove chemicals as well as organisms. You need to be able to filter to 0.2 microns to remove all harmful bacteria and protozoa including giardia and cryptosporidium. The Church Website ([www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org)) provides a link to several of the manufacturers and distributers of suitable filters. You can also check out the options at Emergency Essentials or the local sports center stores.

Stored water tends to go flat over time. To improve the taste of stored water, pour it back and forth between two containers to aerate it. A pinch of salt can improve the taste of treated water.

**SPROUTING:** A great way to increase nutrition. Sprouts are easily digested. Use seeds that are handled as a food crop and not a planting seed crop. Do not use seeds from plants that have poisonous parts. Wheat can be sprouted or grown to use in a variety of ways. An inexpensive sprouter can be made from a Mason jar, a piece of window screen, and a rubber band. There are many good online sources for sprouting. My favorite is: [www.sproutpeople.org](http://www.sproutpeople.org).

**WHEAT:**

Store only good quality wheat. Make sure it is well cleaned (has no stones or debris to damage your wheat grinder.) The moisture content should be 10 percent or less in the kernel. The protein content should be above 12 percent. At less than 16 percent you will need to add gluten to it to make good 100% whole wheat bread. Choose between the hard red or hard white variety. Red wheat has a higher protein content than white. Use as you grind. The nutrients start to oxidize out soon after the wheat is ground. Some treatment methods destroy the ability of the wheat to sprout. Make sure the wheat you get will sprout for high vitamin options such as wheat grass or wheat sprouts.

**OTHER GRAINS AND LEGUMES:**

Oats should be stored after they have been processed (“rolled.”). They have too high a fat content and will go rancid otherwise. Brown Rice likewise has too high a fat content. Store white rice such as that offered by the cannery. Popcorn stores very well and can be ground to make flour for cornbread. After grinding popcorn in my wheat grinder I grind a handful of wheat to clean the excess oil from my grinder. Beans make an excellent addition to your food storage. They are high in protein and most types will store very well. Soybeans (which tend to go rancid with their high fat content) are an exception.

**MILK:**

Make sure the Protein is at least 11 grams per serving and the Calcium is at least 40 % of the US RDA per serving. There are milk substitutes being sold which, though they may taste better, have less nutritional value—be careful. Milk needs to be stored in a cool, dry place.

**SUGAR:**

Moisture and Ants are the main problems we have had in storing our sugar. When you dry pack (can) granulated white sugar, or seal it in the mylar pouches, do NOT put the oxygen absorbing packets in. This tends to make it harden. Brown sugar does not store well for long term storage. I store my brown and powdered sugar in the bags in which they were purchased in a large plastic bucket with a removable seal.

**HONEY**:

Honey is claimed by some to be better for us nutritionally than cane or beet sugar. Honey tends to crystallize with age. This does not affect its food value. The best way to re-liquefy it is to put it (in its container) into some hot water.

**SHORTENING/OIL**:

Choose oil carefully. You want healthy oil that is stable for storage. Some of the healthiest must be refrigerated to stay good. We now store Crisco shortening in the 3 lb. can. Stored properly unopened it will last indefinitely. Store shortening and oil in a cool, dark place. Rotate often.

**DIVERSIFY:** Storing food in a variety of ways (canned, frozen, dried, etc.) is a good idea. If one way is damaged, you have others to fall back on.

**NON FOOD ITEMS**:

Emergency sources of light, heat (for warmth and as fuel for cooking), shelter, alternate cooking tools (i.e. cast iron Dutch oven, solar oven and etc.) and a plan to handle our own waste products should be considered in the event that an emergency disrupts our normal way of life. Camping supply stores, Army Navy stores and emergency preparedness stores such as Emergency Essentials are good sources to go to for these products. Many alternate cooking tools can be homemade very inexpensively by recycling things you already have on hand (for example an apple box oven). You can go online to get instructions to make many of these items. Make sure you store matches (and/or lighters) and batteries.

**72 HOUR EMERGENCY KIT:**

Each member of our family has their own in a regular camping backpack. At General Conference time, (twice/year) we check and replenish them. It is okay to buy a commercially packaged kit, as long as the person who will use the kit is familiar with and knows how to use the items contained therein. Food in your kits should need no hydration and no preparation. You may wish to have copies of important legal documents and records which should be sealed in a waterproof pouch in your kit or scanned to a flash drive. Documents can include: birth and marriage certificates, drivers licenses and passports, copies of deeds, wills, social security cards, immunization records, insurance papers, bank and credit card account numbers, stocks and bonds, an inventory of household goods, an inventory of safe deposit boxes, emergency contact list and phone numbers. Keep a hard copy of property deeds. In the event of a disaster, the area is generally sealed off and only those persons who can prove property ownership are allowed into their neighborhood. Keys to your house, cars, and safe deposit boxes are also suggested to be with you or in your emergency kit. (These can be duplicates so that they can stay in the kit). It would also be important to have an emergency radio in at least one family member’s backpack.

**EMERGENCY PLANS AND DRILLS**:

To minimize the trauma to your family, it is important to plan and practice what your family would do in the event of an emergency or disaster. A weather radio is suggested for this area. It is also suggested that each family member know the location of and how to operate fire extinguishers and how to shut-off electricity, gas, and water to your home. (Caution—if you shut your gas off, a plumber is required to turn it back on.) Train your family to be careful and not use matches, lighters, candles or anything with a spark or flame if the gas line to your home may have been damaged. Each family should have a meeting place and know how to escape the home in the event of a house fire. Fire alarms should be checked regularly to make sure they are operating properly. We check ours at General Conference time. We also have two carbon monoxide monitors (one per floor).

See the article, “Preparing for Emergencies” December, 1990 Ensign for more information. Also refer to the Family Home Storage pamphlet “All is Safely Gathered In.”

Thanks to Elaine Peterson for much of the information in this handout.