**Be Ready With Home Storage**

By Gemie Martin

**Why Store Food**?

* A disruption in our supply system could mean no food will be available on grocery shelves
* Drought and other natural disasters
* Food supply may become contaminated
* Loss of job or family income
* Peace of mind
* Our Prophets have asked us to

**Enemies of Food Storage:**

* Oxygen (store oxygen free inside containers—sugar is one exception, salt is another)
* Heat (store in a cool place—the cooler, the longer the shelf life)
* Humidity (store in a dry place)
* Light (store in a dark place)
* Pests (protect from infestations)

**How to Store Food**

* **Dry Pack Canning in # 10 cans:** Many products can be purchased in # 10 cans online or from the Carrollton Home Storage Center located at 1100 West Jackson Road, Carrollton, Texas 75006. Call them at 972-242-8597 to get their current hours. You can also go there and purchase food and use their canners to dry pack product in # 10 cans (or Mylar pouches—see below). **Food packed there must be purchased there**. You can also purchase your own food and check out the Dry Pack Canner from the Plano, Texas Stake (or one from the Carrollton Home Storage Center). You can buy the cans, lids and oxygen absorbers from the Carrollton Home Storage Center. The cans are currently 75 cents each, the lids are 10 cents each and the oxygen absorbers are also 10 cents each. You need to go online and see what foods are not recommended to be stored this way. For example brown rice and oat groats are not recommended. Go to [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org) to get more information. Flour and some other products may have a bad taste. When oxygen absorbers are put in you are packing in nitrogen, which is what is left after the oxygen is absorbed. **Warning: Botulism poisoning may result if moist products are stored in packaging that reduces oxygen. Store only foods with a low moisture content in oxygen free containers.** Do not use oxygen absorbers for white sugar.
* **Mylar Pouches:** Seal food in pouches (or buy food already sealed like powdered milk) at the Carrollton Home Storage Center. You can buy the pouches (they are currently 30 cents each) from the Carrollton facility and borrow the Impulse Sealer from the Plano Stake. Mylar pouches are preferred by some because they don’t impart as much taste to the products. Some products such as spaghetti noodles are easier to put in the pouch than the can. Pouches also hold more product than cans. For example the can will hold 4.8 lbs. (or 64 servings) of flour while the pouch will hold 5.5 lbs. (73 servings). Mylar bags are not rodent proof like the cans are. Some products such as flour or powdered milk must be wiped off inside or you will not get a good seal. **Warning: Botulism poisoning may result if moist products are stored in packaging that reduces oxygen. Store only foods with a low moisture content.**
* **Vacuum sealing (e.g. Food Saver):** This item will pay for itself if you store food in the freezer. It eliminates freezer burn. You can order the attachments to seal food in Mason jars. They come in both wide and regular mouth sizes. If you use the regular mouth, you will often need to put an additional lid in (upside down) to get it to seal properly. The church website does make a distinction between vacuum packing (which is what you are doing with the Food Saver) and packing using oxygen absorbers). Oxygen absorbers are preferred because they leave the nitrogen in which is good for the food. That said, many of us have stored foods (chocolate chips, brown rice, nuts, etc.) vacuum packed with our vacuum sealers for years. Nuts and chocolate chips I vacuum sealed five years ago are still good. **Warning: Botulism poisoning may result if moist products are stored in packaging that reduces oxygen. Store only foods with a low moisture content.**
* **Dehydrating**: One of the advantages here is that products shrink to take up far less space. Another is that more nutrition is preserved than if you were to bottle those products. You can dehydrate products from your garden or on sale from the produce section or from a farmer’s market. Make sure it has been grown properly. Follow the instructions that come with your dehydrator. You can buy dehydrated products from the store, online, or from the Carrollton Home Storage Center (example, apple or carrot, onions, etc). There are many excellent freeze-dried foods available online.
* **Home Canning (Bottling):** You can process your own foods in a pressure canner or hot water bath. Foods with a high enough acid content such as fruits can be cold packed (put into a Mason jar cold) and processed in a hot water bath. Foods such as meats and most vegetables will need to be processed under pressure in a pressure canner. Follow your manufacturer’s instructions to maintain safety. With either method, as it cools, the jar lids will adhere causing an airtight seal. You will often hear the “pop.” After it has cooled, if the lid can be pressed down but then pops back up, the jar has not sealed and the product will need to be eaten soon, or reprocessed.Jars may be used over and over**. Use only jars that have been manufactured for the purpose of home bottling. Use only quart jars for pressure canning. Follow your manufactures directions**
* **Store already packaged food**. Most of these have the shelf life printed on them.

**Where to Store Food**

* Unfortunately the average Texas Garage is not cool, or dry, and may not even be pest free
* Consider the space under beds. Bed lifters can be purchased to elevate beds. Wood ones are better, plastic may break
* Under sink basins (or in bathrooms in general) is NOT a good place for food storage
* Store on shelves if possible. Air cannot circulate on the floor. Concrete, may wick up moisture or have a chemical reaction with the container—put containers on plywood or heavy cardboard
* Get creative. One sister in our Stake has her bed made out of food storage. Her twin mattress sits on 24 cases of product in #10 cans. This could also work for a guest room

**What Should We Store?**

“Build a small supply of food that is part of your normal, daily diet. One way to do this is to purchase a few extra items each week to build a one-week supply of food. Then you can gradually increase your supply until it is sufficient for three months. These items should be rotated regularly to avoid spoilage.” ([www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org))

**Three Month Supply**

* One way to plan your three month storage is to keep track of what you eat for one or two weeks. Use your record to make a menu. Use your menu to make a shopping list. If you have 13 weeks of food, you have just over a three month supply.
* Purchase wisely
  + Carrollton Home Storage has good pricing because the Church sells at cost.
  + Get bulk foods from warehouses such as Costco and Sam’s. Be sure to figure in the cost of the supplies (cans, lids and or pouches) if you are going to dry pack.
  + Watch for sales
  + Take advantage of group orders

**Longer Term Storage**

* For longer-term needs, and where permitted, gradually build a supply of food that will last a long time and that you can use to stay alive, such as wheat, white rice, and beans.
* [Some of] these items can last 30 years or more when properly packaged and stored in a cool, dry place. A portion of these items may be rotated in your three-month supply.
* The order forms you obtain online from [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org/) lists the shelf life in the a column right on the form. (Items must be stored properly)

**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 higher protein content than white. Many people prefer white wheat because of the lighter color and texture.
* Use as you grind. The nutrients start to oxidize out soon after the wheat is ground. Store ground wheat in refrigerator to slow this process down.
* 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.
* The older the bean, the longer it needs to cook to become tender. Add baking soda to the soak water to speed this process.
* Not all beans can be sprouted. Lima beans, for example, are poisonous. If they are not on the list to be sprouted, don’t.
* You can grind beans in some food grinders. Bean flour can be added to breads or made into instant cooked soups. **In any form (except sprouted), beans should be cooked before being eaten.**

**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
* We found making yogurt and flavoring it to be a good way to eat our powdered milk

**Sweeteners:**

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. It should not be dry packed. 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 a more nutritious option 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. Don’t microwave it. That could kill some nutrients.
* **Honey is NOT safe for infants under one year of age.**

**Fats and Oils:**

* Choose oil carefully. You want healthy oil that is stable for storage. Some of the healthiest must be refrigerated to stay good. Even if the oil has gone rancid, it is still safe to eat. Store in a cool, dark place. It seems to me that some oils that are touted as healthy (like canola) are later deemed not to be good. Research and go with what
* We store Crisco shortening in the 3 lb. can. Stored properly unopened it will last indefinitely. We use oil day to day for the most part, but store shortening for emergency long term storage. Store in a cool place.

**Baking Ingredients**:

* Salt is a necessary food storage staple—keep from moisture
* Spices and other baking supplies can be purchased in bulk at Sam’s Costco and other places. If you can’t find your spice or ingredient for cooking try [www.bulkfoods.com](http://www.bulkfoods.com/) Don’t buy more spice than you will use in its shelf life
* Egg substitute: Unflavored gelatin makes a great egg substitute for baking. 1 teaspoon = 1 egg. Get it at [www.bulkfoods.com](http://www.bulkfoods.com/) Stir 1 teaspoon in 3 Tbsp. cold water. Add 2 Tbsp. + 1 tsp. hot water and stir. Decrease liquid ingredients by ¼ cup.(Everything Under The Sun by Wendy DeWitt p.5) I often use less water in mixing my “eggs” especially if the recipe calls for no other moisture
* Don’t forget to store baking powder, baking soda and yeast. I use SAF Instant yeast and store it in the freezer in a container with a screw-on lid (an old PETE plastic applesauce jar)

**Sprouting**:

* A great way to increase nutrition. Sprouts are generally easily digested. Some of the beans should still be cooked first.
* 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**. DO NOT sprout Lima Beans or Kidney Beans**. If a seed is not on a list with instructions on how to sprout it, do not sprout and eat it
* Wheat can be sprouted or grown to use in a variety of ways
* If you are sprouting any grain for bread or flour, grind and use it (or dry, and/or freeze it) when tiny tails first appear. It will malt and will make a product that is too moist and heavy if tails are allowed to grow too long.
* An inexpensive sprouter can be made from a wide mouth Mason jar, a piece of window screen or cheesecloth, and a rubber band.
* There are many good online sources for sprouting information and supplies. My favorite is: [www.sproutpeople.org](http://www.sproutpeople.org/).
* You can also buy sprouting seeds and supplies at a Natural Grocers store. The closest one is at 7517 Campbell Rd. (Near Campbell and Coit) in Dallas. There is also another down at 11661 Preston (and Forrest) in Dallas. Check prices against what you can buy online.
* Oats and barley (and some other grains) purchased at Whole Foods or Sprouts, will not sprout.
* I invert my sprouter so it can drain in a dish drainer which permanently stays in one half of my kitchen sink. I cover my sprouts with a dish towel until time for them to green a little.

**Non Food Items:**

* Hygiene supplies: soap, shampoo, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, etc.
* Have enough hand sanitizer to put one at every basin in the event the water is off. Even if there is not water, we still go to the basin to wash our hands. A good hand sanitizer which will keep killing germs for up to 4 hours can be ordered at [www.germproproducts.com](http://www.germproproducts.com). It is worth the extra price paid. It is a lotion so it does not dry (and in fact helps heal) hands.
* Toilet paper
* Cleaning and laundry supplies: vinegar, baking soda, chemical cleaners you use, dishwashing detergent, dish liquid, etc.
* Paper goods. Keep a supply on hand in the event a water shortage prevents you from having water to wash dishes.
* Tin foil, plastic wrap, storage bags, etc.
* Emergency sources of light: flashlights, lanterns, candles, etc.
* Emergency fuel: wood, propane, etc. (for warmth and as fuel for cooking). Make sure you store matches (and/or lighters) and batteries
* **Store non-food items such as soaps and cleaning products in a different area than your food storage to prevent mishaps**

Sources: [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org) , Essentials of Home Production and Storage (Church publication from several years back), Everything Under The Sun by Wendy DeWitt, numerous Ensign articles, online sources, and lectures attended**.**