



PERSONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COURSE

CLASS # 2 - FOOD AND WATER

I. INTRODUCTION: Welcome to the 2nd class in the Personal Emergency Preparedness Course. By now you should have completed the task of gathering your paperwork from Class #1. If you have not, please try to complete that before moving on with this class.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVE: The objective of this course is to give you the information you need to be prepared for many types of disasters, and to encourage you to do what you need to do in order to become ACTUALLY "prepared". Our last class we went over the Operation Hope guide called "Emergency Financial First Aid Kit" and your Family Disaster Plan. Did you fill in the guide completely? Did you copy your guide and mail the copy to your out of state contact person? Did you attach photos? GOOD JOB!!

Today we will begin to go over the supplies you will need on hand for you Disaster Preparedness Kit. Specifically, we will be talking about food and water.

III. DISASTER OF THE MONTH: Please review one or two disasters from the "DISASTER" page on the www.getemergencyprepared.com website. Familiarize yourself with these disasters and think about how they may affect you. Not all disasters are even possible in all areas of the country, so focus first on the ones that are most likely to affect your area.

IV. WATER

NOTE - Gather your supplies before purchasing a storage container to put them in. Keep them together in boxes or bags or a corner of a room until you know how much space you need to keep everything.

If you don't have water to drink, you will not survive more than a few days. You need to have enough water in your emergency supplies for each person in your family to have at least ONE GALLON of clean drinking water PER DAY. People with certain medical conditions, and pregnant and nursing mothers need to have at least a gallon and a half per day. In an upcoming class, we will cover much more in depth other ways to obtain and to purify water for consumption. At the top of the handout about water, there is a simple math problem for you to figure out how much drinking water you need for your household. Do not count on being able to drink from the public water supply or from your well in the aftermath of a disaster. I recommend that when you purchase your food supplies, purchase bottled water too. The large containers may be easier to store. CHECK THE EXPIRATION DATES before you buy them. You can also purchase distilled water, which can be used for drinking and cleaning wounds. Distilled water doesn't taste as good as drinking water, but if you pour it back and forth between two containers before drinking it, this oxygenates the water and improves the taste. You can also store water from

your own tap, but you must use sterilized containers and this water needs to be rotated every 6 months. All the information you need about how to do this is on the Water Storage Calculation page. Don't forget your pets, they need clean water to drink too. Cats and dogs each need about one quart per day per pet. Calculate your family water needs and get your water supplies together by next class.

V. FOOD

There are so many different kinds of non-perishable foods, it may seem difficult to pick the right ones for your Emergency Preparedness Kit. Your choices can include canned, dehydrated, dry foods, prepackaged mixes, and MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat), also known as military rations – this is what soldiers in the field are given to eat. This class we are only going to cover canned food and MRE's, because it is my opinion that these are the BEST food choices to have on hand for the following reasons:

- No cooking is required.
- No additional water is needed for preparation or consumption.
- They are easy to open and to eat – if you opt for canned food – DON'T forget to store a can opener with your supplies.
- They store well and have long shelf lives.

MRE's have a LONGER shelf life than canned food – up to 10 years or more depending upon the temperature at which they are stored. Canned food can store for at least 2 years, but decoding the expiration dates can be very time consuming and confusing. One of the handouts goes over decoding the expiration dates for your canned food. I recommend that you write the expiration date in permanent marker on the top of each can and on the outside of each MRE. There is also a handout for listing all of your meal planning for your kit. Make copies of this and use one page per person in your home. Record the expiration dates on this sheet for easy reference and keep it in a ziplock bag on top of all the food in your kit.

My kit at home contains mostly MRE's with some canned food. MRE's are a little more expensive than canned food, but they take up less room and weigh less than metal cans, plus they last so much longer, so you don't need to rotate them out as often. Whichever type of food you choose to go with is OK. A couple of points to remember, HIGH CALORIE is GOOD. The good news is, DIETS go out the window during disasters! Don't choose light or low calorie foods, you need to survive on this stuff, so the more calories, the better! Watch the sodium content in food such as canned soups, too much sodium will increase your water needs. If you have special diet needs, obviously you need to take this into account while purchasing your food. Also include utensils – plastic or metal – a small knife and a can opener, plus some packaged condiments. Little packets of salt, pepper, ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, mayonnaise, lemon juice, etc. from fast food restaurants are easy to obtain and can be kept in a plastic ziplock bag. Also, lemon juice can be added to your bottled water to improve the taste of it!

VI. SUMMARY QUESTION / ANSWER TIME

Thanks to everyone for working so hard to get yourself Emergency and Disaster Prepared! Please work on getting your food and water gathered before the next class. If you have a friend or a group doing this course with you, go together to do your shopping and make it fun! A final note - it is a good idea to have lots of yummy comfort food for snacks in your kit, especially if you have children. It makes dealing with the aftermath of the disaster much easier for them.

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