

Preparing Your Pantry for an Emergency

The recent earthquake in Haiti has forced all of us to think about things we'd rather not think about and imagine the worst happening in our beloved state. Since natural disasters are on our minds and weighing heavy in our hearts, there is no time like the present to give you the information you need to create an emergency food plan for your household.

Preparing your family for a disaster includes having an emergency plan and preparing an emergency supply kit. As part of your emergency plan, identify several escape routes from your home, teach everyone in the house how to turn off the valves for gas, water, and electricity if it becomes necessary, and designate a meeting place outside of your home if you need to evacuate. It's a good idea to talk about the possibility of earthquake and fire with your family and to practice taking shelter in various rooms under tables or in doorways, away from windows, bookcases, mirrors, and other heavy furniture.

It has become very clear that having emergency supplies of water, food, and medications can be life saving. Designate a cool and dry place in your home where you can store emergency supplies. It makes the most sense to pack your reserves into two waterproof duffel bags that can be carried on your back easily. A large plastic crate or trash can is not practical if you need to evacuate. High-quality duffel bags and much of the other gear you may need can be found at REI or www.rei.com.



When deciding what to pack, also consider how much you need. Most experts suggest three to seven days worth of supplies per person plus enough formula and food for any babies and food and water for your pets. Healthy people can survive for weeks without food if there is adequate water around, but not necessarily vice-versa. Therefore, water should be your first priority. Military studies of troops stranded in the desert suggest that a person can survive, though not comfortably, on a minimum of a quart of water a day. Three quarts a day is more comfortable. If you have four people in your house, plan on stocking three gallons of water for all of you for each day.

In terms of food, I have several suggestions for shelf-stable foods that you can keep around for about one year. Although you may just want the comforts of chocolate cake and macaroni and cheese in a disaster situation, it's important to have healthy foods to maintain your immune system, energy levels, and mental clarity. The foods you stock should be somewhat familiar to you, though, so taste my recommendations before you store them. Alternatively, check the shelf life of your preferred brands of packaged foods; if they will last for at least one year, then you can put them into your supplies. The foods I have selected for the list will be good for up to one year from the time of purchase, their packaging is protective in case it gets wet, no heating or cooking is required, and they do not require refrigeration (even the cheese!). The meat and fish are in individual or small packages so they can be consumed in one sitting. I've tried to make the best choices within the categories I was looking at, but not all are perfect. For instance, the peanut butter has some partially-hydrogenated oil in it, but that is what allows it to remain unrefrigerated once open. The jerky is salty, but it is less salty than other brands, and it is an important source of protein. I've never tasted the military's MREs (meals ready to eat), but I would consider stocking them for an emergency situation since they do not require heat, cooking, or any other preparation, can last up to five years, and have more than 50% of our daily calorie needs in a serving. You can find them at surplus stores and online. Also remember that if you do not have to evacuate your



Gelson's registered dietitian, Jessica Siegel, has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are not tailored to specific health problems. Consult your physician before beginning any nutritional program. To contact Jessica, please call her at 1-800-GELSONS.

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refrigerator first, then the food in your freezer, and then your pantry goods. Open the refrigerator as seldom as possible so the cold air does not escape.

Obviously, going without fresh food and running water is not ideal, but I have tried to make things as simple as possible. Many emergency preparedness checklists expect that you'll pack pots and pans and portable stoves. I don't expect you to go that far. If you pack most or all of the items on my list and rotate the food every six to 12 months, I think that's sufficient. Mark your calendars for six months from now as a reminder to eat and replace the food in your kits and test the batteries. All of the foods and many of the supplies (with the exception of the MREs) on my list can be found at Gelson's. Use this shopping list as a starting point for preparing for an emergency situation. No one likes to think about the possibility of a disaster, but if you take the time to prepare your family and your household now, you will have gone a long way towards preventing the devastation that follows a disaster.

✓ Beverages

- Bottled water in unbreakable hard plastic containers, such as *Crystal Geyser* 1 gallon, *Gelson's Finest* 1.5 liter and *Sparkletts* 0.5 liter six packs
- Evaporated milk
- *Gatorade*
- Liquid baby formula

✓ Food

- *Bumble Bee* pouches of albacore tuna
- *Campbell's Healthy Request* and *Select Harvest* canned soups



- *Chicken of the Sea EZ* open individual cans of pink salmon
- *Clif Bar* energy bars
- *Del Monte* no salt added canned vegetables
- *Dole* fruit bowls in light syrup
- *Earthbound Farm* organic dried fruit
- *Flanigan Farms* raw nuts and seeds
- *Gerber* organic baby food in plastic containers
- *Imagine* boxed soups
- *Kashi TLC* crackers
- *Kashi TLC* granola bars
- MREs (military meals ready to eat)
- Pet food
- *Progresso* reduced sodium canned soups
- *Skippy* peanut butter
- *Snack Masters* beef and turkey jerky
- *Sun Vista* canned no salt added beans
- *The Laughing Cow* light Swiss cheeses and mini *Babybel* cheeses
- *Valley Fresh* canned chicken

✓ Kitchen Items

- Cups
- Manual can opener
- Plastic utensils
- Plates

✓ Safety

- Candles
- Compass
- First aid kit
- First aid manual
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Map of your area protected by plastic
- Masks
- Plastic whistle
- Pocket knife
- Portable radio with extra batteries
- Two waterproof duffel bags, one for food, and one for nonfood items
- Waterproof matches
- Work-weight gloves

✓ Personal needs

- Blankets
- Extra clothing
- Medications
- Money
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen

✓ Sanitation

- Hand sanitizer
- Hand wipes
- Household bleach
- Paper towels
- Plastic garbage bags
- Soap

Pump Up Your Produce Intake

You may be surprised to know that you should be eating at least nine servings of produce a day. Consuming at least this many fruits and vegetables a day can help you improve your health, aid in weight loss and prevent many major diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. So how can we go about actually achieving these goals of at least four servings of fruit and at least five servings of vegetables each day? Here are some of my suggestions:

My favorite strategy is so simple that you could use it as your only strategy and improve your diet quality. At lunch and dinner, fill half of your plate with vegetables, a quarter of your plate with lean protein (from animal or plant sources) and the other quarter with whole grains.

Every time you eat a meal or a snack, make a deal with yourself that it has to contain at least one serving of a produce item. For example, use fresh blueberries on your cereal, vegetables on your sandwich, and cherry tomatoes with hummus for your snack.

When you eat out, switch out your side dishes for vegetables. For example, if your side dish comes with mashed potatoes and rice, substitute two different vegetables from the daily specials, like sautéed broccoli or baked butternut squash.

Carve out 90 minutes at home each week to make a big pot of a vegetable-based soup. You can eat the soup throughout the week or freeze it in small containers and defrost it as needed.

Making time for vegetable prep isn't always easy, but the benefits are worth it. You can buy many pre-cut fresh fruits and vegetables and bagged salads (though all need to be washed before cooking), as well as frozen produce that can be cooked in the bag, steamed, added to soups and stews or stir-fried. If you have children, recruit them to help in the kitchen to make your work go faster and to help familiarize them with veggies so they'll be more likely to eat them.

If time and ease of preparation are factors in your cooking, try to make one-pot main dishes such as turkey chili with beans and lots of vegetables, chunky vegetable chicken soup, vegetable omelets and vegetarian lentil stew.



Try to eat a salad as your main course for lunch or dinner. No wimpy side salads I mean a big colorful salad, brimming with dark lettuces, carrots, tomatoes, corn, peas, beets, peppers, cauliflower, beans, chicken or tuna, and some nuts. Make a trip to Gelson's salad bar to create your own unique and healthy combination of satisfying ingredients.

Remember the color rule—different colors mean different nutrients, which in turn mean different health benefits. Try to eat a variety of colorful produce each day, especially at least one serving of orange-red vegetables and one serving of dark green vegetables plus a rainbow of other fruit and vegetables.

Eat fruit for dessert or as a snack. Fruit is nature's fast food—it's easy to carry a couple of whole pieces with you and eat them throughout the day.

Keep in mind that a serving of vegetables is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and a serving of raw lettuce or leafy greens is one cup; a serving of fruit is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cut fruit or a piece of fruit the size of a tennis ball. Fruit or vegetable juice does count in your servings, but for calorie- and blood sugar-control purposes, I prefer that you eat the whole fruit rather than drink the juice. A serving of juice is six ounces or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup.

If your repertoire is limited, then make a pact with yourself and your family to try one

new produce item a week. It's a great way to increase the variety in your diet and familiarize yourself with new and nutritious foods.

My healthy recipes emphasize vegetables, fruit, and other plant foods. Try some of my monthly recipes to help increase the variety and frequency of your produce consumption. If you don't cook, head for our service deli and pick up some of my healthful salads, like Spinach and Grape Salad, Sesame Edamame Salad and Super Antioxidant Chopped Salad.

We all have room for improvement in our diets. Remember that nine is not an upper limit but a minimum goal to achieve for a 2,000 calorie diet, so feel free to eat more fruits and vegetables if you're so inclined, especially if you're active and require more than 2,000 calories (in which case you need more like ten to eleven servings). I hope that I have given you some ideas for including more healthful servings of produce in your diet. It really is possible to meet your goals for eating fruits and vegetables—all it takes is planning, awareness and a little bit of adventurousness on your part if you want to reap all of the health benefits that produce has to offer.

Naked Food of the Month: Brussels Sprouts

This year, my “Food of the Month” column will become the “Naked Food of the Month” column, focusing on healthful foods that taste great plain or with minimal preparation—in other words, naked. Last month, I featured chocolate, which is one of the most obvious naked foods. This month, I will highlight Brussels sprouts—a much less obvious choice, but a worthy subject once you get to know their nutritional benefits and taste them naked.

Brussels sprouts are part of the cruciferous family of vegetables, which include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, mustard greens, turnips, and baby bok choy, to name only a few. The hallmark of this family is that it contains phytonutrients that act as “indirect” antioxidants because they do not contain antioxidants themselves but instead signal our bodies to make our own antioxidants. The antioxidants that we make ourselves are fantastic because they can be produced for up to three or four days after we eat a food like Brussels sprouts, whereas antioxidants that we eat tend to leave our systems in a matter of hours. These indirect antioxidants play an important role in cancer prevention, especially for breast, ovarian, prostate, lung, colon and stomach cancers.

Brussels sprouts are also noted for their high sinigrin content, which seems to make them extra-potent destroyers of pre-cancerous cells. Like their cruciferous cousins, Brussels sprouts offer sulforaphane, indoles, and isothiocyanates, the phytonutrients believed to be responsible for neutralizing free radicals, thus helping to rid the body of cancer-causing substances and reduce cancer risk in general. The cancer protection offered by these unique phytonutrients is the reason why we should all eat a serving of at least one type of cruciferous vegetable each day.

A serving of Brussels sprouts is one cup, which has only 60 calories and a whopping 4 grams each of protein and fiber. A cup of these Belgian natives also supplies 162% of your daily value for vitamin C and 23% of your daily value for heart-protective folate.



Although Brussels sprouts are considered fall and winter vegetables, you can find them year round at Gelson's. You can always get them in tubs, but it's extra nice when you can find them still attached to their stalks, looking like green sleigh bells. Look for bright green sprouts with tight, undamaged leaves. They cook most evenly when the heads are all about the same size, so go for uniformity if you can. When you bring them home, place them in the crisper drawer in the tub they came in or transfer them to a perforated plastic bag. They'll keep for three to five days.

To prepare Brussels sprouts, break them off the stalk (if necessary) and then rinse the sprouts under cold running water. Trim the stems, but not too close to the leaves or they'll fall apart. If desired, halve them through the stem end. Steam them whole for six to 12 minutes, until slightly tender when pierced with a fork. Steam halved sprouts for three to eight minutes. Braise the sprouts in a liquid of your choice, such as broth, for 25–35 minutes. Brussels sprouts pair well with garlic, root vegetables, sage, thyme, mustard, dill, caraway, fennel, lemon, pork, beef, game and nuts. This month, try my simple recipe for Naked Brussels Sprouts.

Jessica's Store Appearances Body Fat Testing

Jessica will be offering complimentary body fat testing and answering your questions about weight loss, food and nutrition. For more information, please visit www.gelsons.com.

Friday, February 19

Tarzana 10:00am
Valley Village 12:30pm

Saturday, February 20

Santa Barbara 12:00pm

Tuesday, February 23

Century City 12:00pm

Thursday, February 25

Pacific Palisades 4:30pm

Friday, February 26

West Hollywood 12:00pm

Testing method is Bioelectrical Impedance and is not appropriate for people with pacemakers or osteoporosis, pregnant women or children. Be well-hydrated for most accurate results.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to call Jessica at 1-800-GELSONS (435-7667) or visit our website www.gelsons.com for more nutrition information and store locations.