

5. Food Storage

Purpose: Help each family evaluate the family's home food storage program.

Family Discussion: President Ezra Taft Benson said, "The revelation to store food may be as essential to our temporal salvation today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah." ("Prepare Ye." *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 69).

The First Presidency also affirms the importance of using a prudent strategy for food storage: "We ask that you be wise as you store food and water and build your savings. Do not go to extremes; it is not prudent, for example, to go into debt to establish your food storage all at once. With careful planning, you can, over time, establish a home storage supply and a financial reserve." (*All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*, Feb. 2007, 1.)

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear." (D&C 38:30)

Action Steps:

During a Family Home Evening, make a complete inventory of your food storage. Have all family members participate. Each family member may choose an item he or she would like to eat during the coming week. Determine how long your current supply would last and set goals to obtain enough food for 72 hours, then three months and then one year. (Water storage is covered in a separate Family Home Evening exercise.)

Three-Month Supply

- Build a small supply of food that is part of your normal diet. This includes canned and commercially packaged food items. 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. Buying a few extra of the items you use when they are on sale will ultimately save you money and pay you dividends in the future. The key is to buy what you normally use, rotate the items through your normal usage, and keep replacing items used.
- To help you calculate the quantity needed (canned tuna or soup, for example) calculate the number of cans used in a month and multiply that number by 12 for a year's supply.

Long-Term Storage (30 years or more)

- For long-term needs, 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, beans, sugar, salt, etc.
- Properly packaged, low-moisture foods stored at room temperature or cooler (75°F/24°C or lower) remain nutritious and edible much longer than previously thought, according to findings of recent scientific studies. The estimated shelf life for wheat, white rice, corn, pinto beans, rolled oats, pasta, potato flakes, and dried apple slices has increased to 30 years or more. Previous estimates of longevity were based on "best-if-used-by" recommendations and experience. Though not studied, sugar, salt, baking soda (essential for soaking beans), and vitamin C in tablet form also store well over a long period of time. Some basic foods do need more frequent rotation, such as vegetable oil (every 1 to 2 years).
- While there is a decline in nutritional quality and taste over time, depending on the original quality of the food and how it was processed, packaged, and stored, studies show that even after being stored for many years, the food will help sustain life in an emergency.
 - Product and packaging recommendations and storage condition information may be found at the Church's Provident Living website. You can also contact your Ward Emergency Preparedness Coordinator or a member of your Bishopric for information. For more detailed information, a

food storage calculator, a list of frequently asked questions, etc. see:

<http://www.lds.org/topics/food-storage>

- Don't forget to store soap, toilet paper, plastic bags, toothpaste, and other essential items you normally use.

TIPS:

To help you calculate the quantity needed for non-food items such as shampoo or toilet paper, take a marking pen and mark the date when an item or box is opened and put into use. When the package is empty, calculate how many days it took to use up the item. This procedure will help you more accurately gauge the quantity your family would need for a three-month or one-year supply.

Take inventory twice a year. April and October Conference week is a great reminder to help us remember to take inventory of our 72-hour kits and three-month one-year supplies.