



# TOTALPREPARE

EMERGENCY, SELF-RELIANCE SOLUTIONS

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## EMERGENCY FOOD BUYER'S GUIDE

### PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE





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## Introduction

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### EMERGENCIES ARE REAL

*With all the modern conveniences we enjoy, it's easy to forget how dependent we are on these technological advancements. Most of us have free-flowing water at our fingertips, electrical power that feeds directly into our homes and 24-hour grocery stores filled with endless supplies of fresh food. This is a luxury; without warning one disaster could delay or destroy our entire food supply.*

*World news tells us how fragile this dependence is. The world has natural disasters that are occurring with increasing frequency and severity; continuous political unrest rages in countries across the globe; economies are failing all around us. We are constantly reminded that our fragile system is not guaranteed from failure. This system is similar to an elaborate structure made out of dominoes: the shifting of one piece can cause the whole thing to come crashing down.*

*As the world becomes increasingly less stable, more and more people are choosing to become educated on emergency preparedness. Like those of us at Legacy, people are learning that in an emergency situation or other devastating life event (job loss, severe illness or unanticipated disability), we cannot always rely on government or other people to step in and provide for the needs of our families. Should incident occur the only way to assure ourselves that our loved ones will be taken care of is to get prepared on our own.*

*If we want to take care of our families' needs in a crisis, having a sufficient store of emergency food is the crucial first step. Food storage options seem endless. Anyone who wants to start a food storage plan may feel overwhelmed by the large amount of conflicting and confusing information on the web regarding what to store, how much you need and how to store it.*

*In this guide Legacy Foods outlines some basic information to help you make the best choices as you build your family's emergency food storage supply. We will specifically discuss the benefits and disadvantages of different types of food storage, common questions about how much food to store, the importance of storing healthy and tasty food and how best to store what you have. When planning your food storage you have many considerations to make; this guide will help you get started.*

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*Questions? We can help you plan! Call us at 1-888-832-1733*

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## Chapter 1

### FOOD STORAGE TYPES COMPARED

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*With many food storage options, it's easy to get overwhelmed. When planning your food storage there are many questions to answer: Are cans better? Should I have bulk foods? Are MREs really a feasible food storage option? What's all the hype about freeze-dried foods? How do I know which is right for my family?*



*As you navigate your options many factors will weigh in your decision. This includes: nutritional content; ease of storage and transport; cost; shelf life; taste; ease of preparation. All types of storage food have benefits and you should have some of each in your supply. Below is a summary of the different types of food storage options and their relative benefits and drawbacks.*

### Pantry/Canned Foods

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Pantry foods are probably the most familiar type of food storage. Cans are a simple and easy way to start storing food because you can find a wide variety in any grocery store. This group also includes boxed items and other packaged foods. Filling your pantry with foods that you eat every day makes great short-term food storage because these foods are convenient to use and easy to prepare. Weekly sales are a great way to quickly build up your food supply fairly inexpensively. One added benefit of cans is that they do not require cooking and can be eaten cold if needed. These foods are ready to eat with minimal-to-no preparation. Wet-packed cans contain water or juice with the contents of the can making them beneficial if water supplies are low during an emergency situation.

Pantry goods typically have expiration dates from one to five years so they need to be rotated more frequently than other types of food storage. Many pantry foods are not packaged for long-term storage and are more susceptible to bugs and rodents. These are foods that you should eat and rotate on a regular basis; simply put the newer food behind what is already on your pantry shelf. Make sure to check for dents in cans and only buy non-damaged items so the food is not compromised. Make sure to have at least one manual can opener in case of a power outage; it would be a challenge to open canned food without one.

Cans are not a great portable option because they are heavy and bulky, making them difficult to store and pack. Boxed items are lighter but typically require other ingredients to prepare. When buying canned foods make sure to get the appropriate size. Large #10 cans are a common food storage option and seem to be a great value for your money; however, they can be a bad idea because once opened you have to consume the contents within a short amount of time or it will spoil. Choose your #10 cans wisely or you could be eating the same food item for several meals in a row, finding a way to store leftovers or dealing with spoilage. In summary, pantry foods are the first you will use in an emergency because of the easy preparation and limited shelf life.

## Bulk Foods

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Bulk foods are another conventional way to store food. When properly stored these dried items have a long shelf life; some will virtually last forever. Typical bulk foods are wheat, powdered milk, corn meal, dried potatoes, dry beans, corn, pasta, and white rice. Many people like bulk foods because it can be a do-it-yourself method of storage. Other items available in bulk include vegetable oils, baking powder, coffee, tea, cocoa, salt, sugar, honey, bouillon and vinegar.

Storing bulk foods is not an ideal food storage option because it takes more preparation and creative cooking to produce a variety of meals. On the other hand, bulk foods are a fantastic way to stretch out any meal and will allow you to make things from scratch. Adding rice, pasta or beans to a meal can bulk up the meal and stretch your food dollar. With wheat, yeast and salt you can make a loaf of bread. The downside to bulk food is that you will need to have an alternative cooking should you lose power or gas. You won't be able to make much from these food items without the ability to cook, bake, boil or simmer.

Bulk foods can be difficult to store because they come in large, heavy packages or containers, some of which might need to be repackaged for long shelf life. This is not the type of food you want to carry with you if you need to evacuate your home. The biggest disadvantage of bulk food storage is that you will need to cook mostly from scratch. Keep in mind that though bulk foods may provide more food per pound, they also require longer planning and preparation in order to have a wide variety of meals.

A significant drawback to having only bulk foods in your food storage is that you are unable to make a quick meal. During the immediate aftermath of a disaster you won't have time to stop and cook for 3 hours; you will be focusing on other things and will need something you can quickly eat with little preparation.

## MREs

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Meals, Ready-To-Eat (MREs) are military rations. The name says it all; these full-course meals have everything in one package: entree, side dish, dessert, drink and condiments; these often include a small heating device. MREs do not require water and are the most convenient food storage option. Some people like the taste but others do not. This is what our military uses because of their high calorie content and because they are shelf stable. MREs also include a spoon, toilet paper, wet nap and salt with every meal. Because of the high calories they are an excellent choice for a bug out or evacuation situation.

Though they can be on the heavy side, MREs are a good option because they are very portable. They are the perfect food to put in your evacuation bag. MREs a great short-term, zero-preparation food to live on until you are able to get to a more secure location. The shelf life of MREs can be 5 to 10 years if stored well; after that, palatability can be affected. The greatest disadvantage of MREs is that they are very expensive and have a limited variety. They are best reserved for short timeframes.

## Dehydrated or Freeze-dried /Long-Term Storage 10-25+ Shelf Life

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Another emergency food option is freeze-dried and/or dehydrated foods. This type of food storage is convenient because it is delivered already packaged for long-term storage. Some foods are better preserved using the freeze-drying process; others are better dehydrated. Some companies may stick to one method while others use a combination of both in their prepackaged food storage options.



**Dehydration** is a long-standing method of preserving food. During this process foods are put through a low temperature chamber where up to 98% of the moisture is taken out and then the food is packaged. This dehydration process reduces both the size and weight of the food while maintaining flavor. Tests have shown that texture and color can be affected with this process. Some experts believe that nutrients are reduced during the dehydration process but others do not agree.

Dehydrated foods are lightweight and can be ideal for quick mobility in the event of an evacuation. These foods are typically not full meals but are the foods you use to make meals such as: fruits, vegetables, jerky, eggs, pancake mix, butter, tomato and cheese powder. Dehydrating can be done at home but can be very time-consuming; storage life will be shorter without the right packaging. Dehydrating food at home can be a cost-effective way of adding to your food storage if you incorporate these foods into your everyday cooking. Professionally dehydrated foods are properly packaged and can store for a much longer time.

**Freeze drying** is a process of preserving food that requires high-end equipment that flash freezes fresh or cooked food. The food is then put in a vacuum chamber that remains as cold as -50° F. Minimal heat is applied and the ice evaporates without ever going back into the liquid phase. This removes almost all of the moisture from the food. Freeze dried foods make for better tasting meals because the process preserves the color, flavor, shape and texture of the original food. Because water has been removed it weighs less, making it a great portable option. One downside is the slightly higher cost than dehydrated food. Another is that since it retains the shape of the food it is also slightly bulkier to store.

Both dehydrated and freeze-dried meals have many advantages over other food storage options. Overall they are easier to store, are light-weight, take up little space and do not require refrigeration. They do require water for reconstitution so you will need to increase your water storage accordingly. These foods are properly packaged for long-term storage and easier mobility. These foods save you time because they are quick and easy to prepare. They are also nutritious and great tasting. The main disadvantage of these types of foods is the cost. Due to the intense processes these foods undergo as well as being pre-packaged for long-term storage, the cost is higher.

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*Study these options and decide which types can fit into your plan. Each level of food storage has advantages and disadvantages. Because of this many people choose to have a combination of the food storage types for the most comprehensive plan. Consider all the factors and store what is right for your family.*

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## Chapter 2

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### HOW MUCH FOOD TO STORE

*When starting their food storage people commonly ask: How much food do I need? There are a few considerations to make when deciding on quantity. Each food storage type has its own characteristics so included below are some things to keep in mind when determining how much to store.*



### Pantry/Canned Foods

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If you decide to include pantry/canned foods such as the grocery items that you consume regularly, calculating this can be fairly simple. First figure out how much you and your family go through in a typical week. Take that number and multiply it by the amount of time you would like to have food on hand and strive to obtain that amount. Thirty days is a good initial goal.

Taking advantage of grocery store sales is a great way to quickly build up this portion of your food storage. Remember: eat what you store and store what you eat. This means don't buy foods that you don't normally eat just because you see them on sale. By purchasing and preparing the foods you normally eat, rotating out the oldest items in your pantry first and then replacing these items regularly you ensure that this portion of your food storage is always fully stocked and up-to-date.

### Bulk Items

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When it comes to bulk foods, remember that these storage items are excellent for extending meals that you make with your other storage foods or making meals from scratch. Adding rice, pasta or beans to any meal will stretch your food dollar regardless if the meal is canned, freeze-dried or a long-term storage food, Bulk foods are also great for having everyday essentials on hand such as salt, sugar and flour. For example, you will want to store sugar if you are used adding it to your daily coffee.

When determining how much to purchase consider your family's typical serving sizes and then buy the items based on how many times a week you plan on needing them. Having a surplus will never be an issue because bulk foods can last a very long time if properly stored. Note that when purchasing bulk food items you may need to repackage them in order to extend their shelf life sufficiently for your needs.

### MREs

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If you plan to include MREs as part of your food storage, keep in mind their limited variety and high cost; they are best suited for short-term emergencies. MREs don't require any cooking so put them in your go bags or evacuation packs. A case of MREs contains 12 meals. Each MRE contains 800-1200 calories so you only need about two per day. A smart goal would be to have one case of MREs per person; this will provide approximately 1 week of meals for each family member.

## Dehydrated and Freeze Dried Foods

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Dehydrated and freeze-dried meals are much lighter and can come in small packages for portability. These, too, could double as a bug out supply with the understanding that extra water would be needed for reconstitution.

While you can get individual food items that are either dehydrated or freeze dried, one advantage of these foods is that you can buy prepackaged meals and then all that you would need to make a tasty meal is hot water. These complete meals may not be as convenient to eat as MREs but they provide a much greater variety of meals from which to choose.

Unlike pantry food and MREs, calculating how much freeze-dried and/or dehydrated food you will need is not easy so we will guide you through it.



## How Much Long-Term Food is Enough?

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When deciding how much freeze-dried and dehydrated foods to add to your emergency supply, the most important rule to remember is to go by calories not by serving size. Emergency food companies have different definitions for what constitutes a serving and emergency food kits are not one-size-fits-all even though they may be advertised that way. The first step is to figure out how many calories you and your family consume on a daily basis. Next multiply that by the number of days for which you want to be prepared. This becomes the minimum number of calories that you need to have in your food storage program.

Once you know how many calories your family requires you can figure out how much dehydrated and freeze-dried meals you need. Keep in mind that your daily caloric requirement changes based on what activities you are doing. For example, a hard work day cutting down trees and moving storm debris will require more calories than sitting around playing cards while waiting for a storm to pass. Its best to assume you will need more calories than less. In general teenage and adult males need 2800 calories per day, teenage and adult females require 2200 and children 13 and under use 1400. Infants require special food so plan and purchase food accordingly.

Once you have the total daily calories needed decide how many months' worth of food you want. This is influenced by your personal comfort level. The longer period of time you can supply for the better but most people can't afford to go out and buy a year's worth of food without some prior planning and budgeting. The best recommendation is to start where you can. First build up a 2-week supply and then move to 30 days' worth. Once you have that, work up to three months, then six and then a year. Build up your food storage supply as big as you need in order to feel safe and to be able to provide for your family in any disaster situation.

## Watch out For Serving Size

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Remember when choosing an emergency food supplier to look at the total calories in what they call a serving. Similar with our everyday food, a single serving is not enough calories to be considered a complete meal. Instead consider the total number of calories in the package. Going by our figures above an adult male needs about 2800 calories a day or 933 calories per meal.

Many people make the incorrect assumption that a serving size should contain enough calories for a complete meal. In truth, there are no standards for serving sizes; they are only suggested portions by the manufacturer.

Serving sizes are recommendations that also assume that you will also be eating other foods. Focus on the amount of calories in the whole package instead of the number of servings per package. Don't expect an entrée meal to complete your calorie intake. Look into having snacks, drinks, fruits, vegetables, rice and other food items to help increase your daily calories. Having a variety of foods to eat creates normalcy in an emergency situation.

**Legacy Premium™ doesn't skimp on Serving Size**

Average Food Storage Competitor:  $\frac{3}{4}$  CUP

Legacy Premium Food Storage:  $1\frac{1}{2}$  CUPS

**Not All Serving Sizes are Equal**  
Other companies cut their serving size to cut their costs!

**Compare the individual Serving Size**  
Not just the number of servings

**Legacy Offers a Proper Serving Size**

## Chapter 3

### WHAT TO STORE...INGREDIENTS MATTER

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*One common misconception about emergency preparedness is that food storage quality doesn't matter as long as you have some food stored that will last for a long time without spoiling. Having something stored is better than nothing but it is also crucial to fill your body with nourishing ingredients during an emergency. This will keep you satisfied and in top form. Eating lesser-quality foods can leave you susceptible to sickness and diminish your mental and physical health. You are storing food to protect your family against starvation but you also want to protect them from sickness and diseases caused by harmful ingredients. Do this by knowing what goes into the food that you buy.*

*Long-term emergency food storage is made to last a long time. Some companies in the industry cut corners and add a variety of artificial preservatives, dyes and flavors in order to lengthen the shelf life of their foods. If you are committing to protect your family be sure to make the best, healthiest choices possible. When selecting your food storage beware of artificial ingredients. Here are other red flags to consider as you look around.*

### Avoid Hydrolyzed Yeast Extract and Similar Flavorings

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Hydrolyzed yeast extract is a controversial ingredient found in many packaged foods and is common in food storage items. It is primarily used as a flavor-enhancer and is created by breaking down yeast cells. The FDA classifies yeast extract as a natural ingredient but according to many health experts, yeast extract is a cheaper alternative to monosodium glutamate (MSG) and actually does contain some MSG.<sup>(1)</sup> Some health and consumer advocates say that labeling something as containing yeast extract is the way food companies avoid saying that a product contains MSG.<sup>(2)</sup>

MSG has many negative side effects. Consumption of MSG has been linked to a variety of scary conditions including headaches, numbness in the face and neck, heart palpitations, chest pain, nausea, weakness, appetite control problems and other negative symptoms.<sup>(1)</sup> Whether or not you have had a sensitivity to MSG in the past, it is best to avoid this ingredient in your storage food altogether.

For a good list of other additives that are linked to MSG check out the following articles:

[truthinlabeling.org/hiddensources](http://truthinlabeling.org/hiddensources)  
[theindigoearth.com/articles/2008/07/30/my first article](http://theindigoearth.com/articles/2008/07/30/my_first_article)

## Consider GMO-Free Foods

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When looking for emergency food it is equally important that the ingredients are free from genetically modified organisms or labeled GMO-free. The use of genetically modified foods is another controversial topic in the world of food and nutrition. It is best to avoid GMOs while the debate is still going on, particularly if this is a long-term purchase.

Genetically modified organisms are created by taking the genetic material of one organism and inserting it into the genetic code of another. This bold practice is becoming more and more widespread despite being widely acknowledged as a risky and understudied process. Many experts opposed to genetically modified foods argue that there has not been adequate testing on human subjects. Despite the increasing insertion of GMO ingredients into mainstream foods there are still too many unknowns about the health effects these human-engineered foods could have. Some health groups like the Center for Food Safety have gone so far as to claim that genetically modified foods can increase the likelihood of antibiotic resistance, immune-suppression and even cancer.<sup>(3)</sup> Why put your family at risk with untested ingredients when you will have other worries to contend with in a survival situation?

Because the use of GMOs in manufactured foods is becoming such a widespread practice, very few emergency foods are free of GMO ingredients. However, there are a few companies that produce foods that are GMO-free. If this is an issue that is important to you, be certain that the emergency food is certified GMO-free. Some companies may claim to be free of genetically modified ingredients but without the certification have no proof.

## Other Health Considerations

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Other health considerations include checking amounts of cholesterol, trans fat and sodium in the food storage. Packaged foods often have high amounts of these three things and emergency foods are no exception. High-quality emergency food brands limit cholesterol, trans fat, and sodium amounts but you need to read the labels to be sure.

## Make Sure Your Food Storage Ingredients Will Stand the Test Of Time

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Emergency food should be able to last and still be healthful. As you look for the right emergency food be aware that some food storage companies haven't done their research on ingredients that spoil versus those that keep. As a result they incorporate ingredients into their emergency food that go bad after a relatively short period of time. Canola oil, for example, will only last a year before it goes rancid, thus spoiling whatever food storage in which it is used. Novice food companies use canola oil in their granola to make the clusters stick together and uneducated food buyers end up with a worthless product after just a year.

Bottom line: it's important to know what goes into your storage food. Take the time to do some research on the food you are buying; be sure it will contribute to the health and well-being of you and your family in a disaster.

## Chapter 4

### TASTE MATTERS

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*You have made your checklist, done the research and narrowed down your options; now it comes down to taste and appeal.*

*Emergency-preparedness gurus often publish lists of specific items you need to store for an emergency. One popular guideline suggests something like this: for a year's worth of food storage each person needs 350 pounds of grain, 75 lbs of milk, 65 lbs of sugar, etc. These types of specific food guidelines can be a helpful starting point but one size does not fit all. That guideline is useless for people who have food sensitivities such as gluten or dairy intolerance. Review the first chapter of this guide and consider what is best for your family.*

*Regardless if you choose canned, bulk or long-term storage foods, the most important principal we stress is to store the food that your family eats the most. Having food routines that carry over from your life before will make the hard adjustments easier in a disaster situation. Buying things you don't regularly eat just for added variety on the shelf may sound like a good idea. Unfortunately these will likely be the last foods you reach for and if not regularly rotated could be expired, possibly ending up not usable at all.*



*Do you remember going to dinner at a friend's house as a kid? Even if it was a close friend everything about the dinner seemed foreign to you from the way they folded their napkins to the saltiness of their gravy. Even the smell of their cooking was different from the dinnertime smells in your kitchen at home. Little differences like this mattered and affected your comfort level. Eating food from different cultures can sometimes put us in this situation, too. Routines, especially involving food, can be powerful in an emergency situation. Food affects the way we feel. If unfamiliar, food can make a scary situation that much worse.*

*Many food storage suppliers offer entrée options that are familiar favorites like macaroni and cheese, enchiladas and various soups. Look around at all available options and make selections based on what your family eats on a regular basis.*

## Store Food that Tastes Good

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At first glance taste might not seem like a very important factor when purchasing emergency food. It's easy to justify buying food that you don't normally eat and telling yourself, "It will be an emergency. Whether I like the food I'm eating or not will be the least of my worries." However, making sure your food storage is appealing and tastes good to you and your family is more important than it initially seems. Having food that's delicious and comforting, especially in an emergency situation, will bring peace of mind. Another good thing about having food storage you like is knowing that your family will eat it and it won't go to waste.



If you have kids, buying good-tasting food is even more important. Kids are picky eaters. If it is hard to get your child to eat during a regular night at the dinner table, think of the desperation you will feel trying to get your child to eat in an emergency situation. This is not just about preferences, either. In emergency situations kids have a particularly hard time forcing themselves to eat, especially if the food is unfamiliar. On the other hand, if the food is something your child loves, it will really help.



Food that is familiar and tastes good has the power to make us feel relaxed, comfortable and cared for, even in stressful situations. Ideally, you would occasionally replace your regular meal with something from your storage food so that your family gets used to eating it.



## Sample your Options

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Since long-term food storage is made by others it is important to sample before buying. Never make a food storage purchase without first sampling one product from each of the companies you have narrowed down. Most food storage companies have small sample packs of their larger food kits available that are fairly inexpensive. Test a few and choose the ones that most suit your family's tastes. This not only gives you an idea as to how the food will taste, but you will see what is involved in the preparation.



When ordering a sample ask the company if the food they are sending to you is the same as what is in the larger packages. Sometimes companies send out higher quality food in their sample packages to trick buyers into thinking that their food is better than it really is.



## Variety is Optimal

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When building your food supply, make sure to include a variety of all types of food storage. No one wants to be stuck eating canned beans for six months. Eating the same foods for a long period of time can also leave you deficient in the vitamins and minerals you normally get from a wider variety of foods.

Start collecting different entrée options and then add in “good” calorie side dishes for variety. You can also expand your food storage assortment by purchasing more canned goods, bulk items and other supplementing items. A wide food variety is enjoyable and will also provide options should you develop an intolerance to a particular food.

## Dietary Needs

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If you or a family member has special dietary needs, some food storage companies offer gluten-free, dairy-free and vegetarian options. You want to store food similar to what you regularly eat that has already been adapted to your needs.



## Plan on Extra Water

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When purchasing items for your storage plan consider your additional water needs. Unlike canned food, bulk foods need water for recipes and preparation; freeze-dried and dehydrated food also need water for reconstitution. We take for granted that every day we have water immediately on hand. Figuring out how much water you use every day and calculating how much you need to store for food preparation can become overwhelming. Water storage takes up a lot of space and is hard to accomplish. Your best option is to first store what you can. We recommend that you also invest in a quality water filter and locate an alternate water source.

## Don't Forget the Treats

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The idea of storing a few luxury items that you are used to having and would not like to do without is commonly overlooked. These items might be coffee, chocolate or other specialty foods that are part of your routine. Having luxury items may seem trivial but a simple treat or comfort snack will be invaluable in a survival situation. Not only will it be good for morale, you could use it as a bartering tool should the situation come to that. Having treats stored for an emergency benefits everyone.

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*Deciding which food storage option you need and how much to secure can be overwhelming. We have included a worksheet at the end of this document to help you develop the best food storage plan for you and your family. We will help you ask the right questions, provide you with answers and help you make the best choice.*

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## Pet Considerations

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For people with pets it is a common practice to store several months' worth of food at a time in case of emergency. Because dry pet food can go rancid relatively quickly it's a good idea to continually rotate through your stock. Canned pet food can last as long as regular canned foods but is typically pricier than dry pet food.

Dry pet food is a good option and can be purchased in larger quantities. This pet food contains fats and oils and will spoil if not stored correctly. Dry food stored in large plastic, glass or metal bins can help protect the food against insects but exposure to light, air, humidity and heat speeds up the rate at which the food degrades. The fats and oils can stick to the bottom and sides of the container leaving a film that can become rancid over time. This further contaminates other bags of food added to it and could lead to a health risk for your animal.

It is best to wash and dry the container thoroughly prior to adding new food. You could also keep the dry food in its original packaging when placing it in one of these containers. Make sure to get the air out of the bag after each use and seal with a good lid. If these dry foods are unopened or stored well the shelf life can be up to one year. Always check the "best buy date" for your particular brand. The recommended "use by" date for an open package is six weeks. If you repackage this food into food grade buckets and add oxygen absorbers you may increase this to up to 2 years, depending on the food. Further measures must be taken to avoid spoilage for longer storage.



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*Food storage can be a big purchase so take the time to figure out what foods you and your whole family will want to eat. An emergency is not the time to try new foods, nor is it the time to force your family to eat food they do not like. Food should be a comfort rather than a negative factor adding to the stress of a bad situation. Hopefully this is food insurance that you never have to use but if you do, you want it to be good, healthy food that is enjoyable to eat.*

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## Chapter 5

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### MAKE IT LAST

*Now that you know what you want to store and how much, you need to plan how you will store it. At the beginning of this guide we outlined how long you can expect each type of food storage to last if properly stored. Now learn what you can do to achieve the maximum shelf life of your storage food.*

### Battling the Elements

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It is important to know the four enemies that can impact the shelf life of your storage food: oxygen, temperature, moisture and light. These four threats affect all types of food storage: cans, bulk, MRE's and long-term dehydrated and freeze dried foods.

**Oxygen:** In order to achieve optimal and long shelf life, storage foods must have extremely low oxygen levels. Oxygen destroys shelf life because even small amounts will allow bacteria to grow and spoil food. Oxygen can also alter the fats, colors, vitamins and flavors in food storage.

Once a food has been packaged the residual oxygen level should be well below 2%. If a food storage company will not disclose the levels of oxygen in their food or if they simply admit that they do not test for oxygen levels, steer clear of that food. Food that is not tested for extremely low oxygen cannot last for the amount of time most companies advertise. This is another important reason to purchase properly packed foods or repack it for maximum shelf life.

**Temperature:** To extend the shelf life food must be stored at room temperature or below. Higher temperatures can be damaging to food storage because proteins can breakdown and vitamins and nutritional elements can be destroyed. Color, flavor, smell and taste can also be affected. Temperature is the one element that can have the greatest effect on the overall quality of your food. Store your food in the coolest environment available.

Some possible places might be root cellars, basements and under-the-stairs storage. Other areas include pantries and closets that are away from heating vents or refrigerators/freezers. Optimal storage is in a consistently cool and dry place. Storing your food in a garage, attic or outdoor shed is not recommended since these places can get very hot.

**Moisture:** One of the reasons freeze-dried and dehydrated food is so well-suited for long-term storage is because most of the water has been removed. Foods that are stored in a humid environment are likely to spoil from growth of microorganisms. Low moisture is also important for storing bulk items such as grains, beans, rice and flour.

**Light:** Light can deteriorate vitamins, proteins and fats in food. It can also discolor foods and affect flavors. Keep your food storage in a low lit area if possible. For this reason long-term food storage containers are always opaque.

## Packaging

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Packaging is an important consideration when choosing your long-term storage food. Here are the most common packaging options and materials that companies use:

**Cans:** Canning has been an efficient way of packaging and storing food for many years. This airtight, solid container can withstand the slight vacuum that the oxygen absorber packs may create. Once the container is opened the preserved food begins to break down due to moisture, oxygen, temperature, and light. The food may still seem dry but the moisture content of the air is enough for bacteria to begin to grow. Be careful when deciding which foods to buy and store in cans. As long as the can has a good seal this is a good method of packaging food storage. One downside is that because the can retains its shape, it is nearly impossible to know if the seal is still good; the only way to tell is to open the can.

**Mylar bags:** Mylar bags are a polyester film laminated to aluminum foil. This produces a strong material that creates a barrier from oxygen and moisture and is highly resistant to puncturing. Essentially it is a flexible can and an excellent choice for long-term food storage. Having more manageable portions is a great advantage of storing food in Mylar bags; this provides less opportunity for spoilage, insect infestation and waste.

Unfortunately Mylar can still be punctured. Unlike #10 cans it is easier to tell when the seal has been broken or compromised; if the seal has been broken you will see the puncture or the bag will become bloated. If the bag has a vacuum you'll know if the seal was compromised because the bag won't be tight around the food anymore. These signs allow for easier inspection of your storage food and eliminate the chance of discovering your food has gone bad because of a poor seal, right when you need it most.

Mylar packages combined with both oxygen absorbers and nitrogen flushing can virtually eliminate all oxygen and currently provides the best packaging available today.

**Oxygen absorbers:** An oxygen absorber is a small packet of material used to remove the available oxygen in a container and increases shelf life. The active ingredient is an iron oxide powder that chemically reacts and removes oxygen from the surrounding atmosphere. The absorber can prevent food color change, stop oils in foods from going rancid and prevent the growth of aerobic microorganisms that need oxygen to thrive.

**Nitrogen Flushing:** Nitrogen flushing is one of the newest, most efficient ways to package long-term storage food. Nitrogen doesn't react with food like oxygen does so foods will stay fresher longer. It doesn't affect the flavor or texture of the food, either. The nitrogen fills up the bag, flushing out the air and oxygen. Nitrogen flushing is a safe, FDA-approved method of packaging food storage.

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*Carefully choose the type of packaging you will use to protect your food storage investment. Consider all the available packaging options for the food you want to store. Being knowledgeable in these practices and how they are used can help you make good decisions for your food storage plan.*

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## Additional Storage Tip

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Make sure that your food supply is safe from rodents, insects and other intruders. Keeping it three to six inches off the ground and away from walls is generally a good way to avoid these pests. As an additional measure don't store food containers directly on concrete floors because the moisture in the concrete can seep into plastic, corrode metal and dampen paper sacks. Store your food supply on wooden pallets to avoid this.

## Things to Keep in Mind

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Being prepared is simply having an alternate way of doing everyday things should your daily routine be disrupted. When preparing food storage meals consider three important things: heat, water and sanitation.

**Heat:** How are you going to cook if there is no electricity or gas? Have several alternate methods for preparing your food.

**Water:** Take into account the foods you have chosen to store. If you are storing bulk, freeze-dried or dehydrated food, make sure you store extra water, too.

**Sanitation:** Consider storing paper plates and plastic cutlery to conserve water. By throwing away or burning dishes you keep germs from spreading and prevent illness.

## Food Storage Serving Matrix

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HOW MUCH EMERGENCY FOOD SHOULD YOU STORE?  
[CLICK HERE FOR AN ESTIMATE](#)

In order to help you understand how much food you and your family need, we put together a simple food calculator that will show you how many servings you will need to have on hand to enjoy 3 servings of food a day.

We're happy to help!  
 Call us if you have any questions  
 1-888-832-1733.

Number of Months	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Number of People												
1	90	180	270	360	450	540	630	720	810	900	990	1,080
2	180	360	540	720	900	1,080	1,260	1,440	1,620	1,800	1,980	2,160
3	270	540	810	1,080	1,350	1,620	1,890	2,160	2,430	2,700	2,970	3,240
4	360	720	1,080	1,440	1,800	2,160	2,520	2,880	3,240	3,600	3,960	4,320
5	450	900	1,350	1,800	2,250	2,700	3,150	3,600	4,050	4,500	4,950	5,400
6	540	1,080	1,620	2,160	2,700	3,240	3,780	4,320	4,860	5,400	5,940	6,480
7	630	1,260	1,890	2,520	3,150	3,780	4,410	5,040	5,670	6,300	6,930	7,560
8	720	1,440	2,160	2,880	3,600	4,320	5,040	5,760	6,480	7,200	7,920	8,640
9	810	1,620	2,430	3,240	4,050	4,860	5,670	6,480	7,290	8,100	8,910	9,720
10	900	1,800	2,700	3,600	4,500	5,400	6,300	7,200	8,100	9,000	9,900	10,800

## Chapter 6

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# CONCLUSION

### Get Prepared Then Rest Easy

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You are now be equipped with the knowledge and tools you need to make the right decision for your food storage needs. You know the various types of food storage and the benefits and drawbacks of each. You know what to avoid with food storage and how to properly store it. You have learned to do your research and know what you are buying; you can now make informed choices that will cater to your family's needs.

Too often the message of emergency preparedness is doom and gloom. While food storage will certainly help in large disasters, it can also help in everyday emergencies such as a decrease of income through job loss, injury or illness.

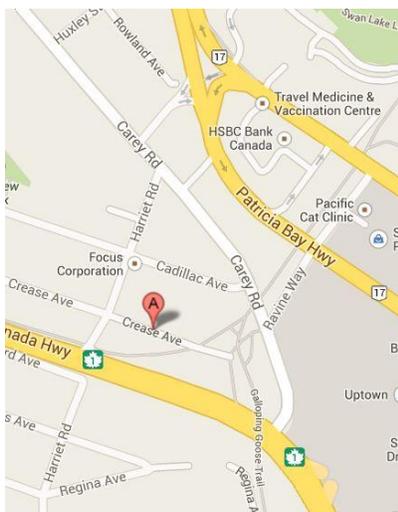
No matter how you use your food storage, knowing that you have it will alleviate stress. You will have peace of mind will because you will be able to feed your family with the ample supply of emergency food stored in your home. Most importantly you won't need to rely on others to step in and provide for you because you prepared ahead of time. You can know that you've done all you could and that you will be able to meet your family's needs no matter the situation.

### This Guide has Been Brought to You by Legacy Foods

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If you choose to include long-term dehydrated and freeze-dried foods in your plan we hope you will look closely at Legacy Foods. We are here to help you prepare your family for emergencies by providing the best prices on freeze-dried food storage anywhere. We believe that Legacy food is the smartest choice because we offer the best overall value. We have the lowest cost per day and a greater variety of gourmet tasting freeze-dried meals than others in the business.

We partnered with some fantastic companies like **Total Prepare Inc.** to come up with products that meet all the requirements for great food storage: nutritional but full of delicious flavor; GMO-free with no artificial flavorings; vegetarian and gluten free options; top of the line packaging that ensures a 25-year shelf life.



For more information visit Total Prepare's website at [totalprepare.ca](http://totalprepare.ca)

Or visit their showroom near Uptown  
**48 Crease Ave**  
**Victoria BC V8Z 1S3**  
**1-888-832-1733**

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