

## HEALTH INFORMATION

### Disaster Preparedness Supplies

Updated: February 2015

International SOS recommends that all travelers carry basic medical supplies with them as part of any trip (see the general Traveler's Check List). However, some people may wish to carry items beyond the basics to be prepared for emergency situations.

These supplemental items may be especially pertinent for aid workers, travelers destined for remote/underserved areas, and people who will visit destinations during their traditional monsoon, hurricane or flood seasons.

This list can also help you compile an at-home kit to help prepare for natural disasters. Obviously, the items you decide to compile depend on your location, available space and the time in which you have to prepare.

	Packed
<b>Emergency Supplies</b>	
Cash: small bills and coins	
Portable, battery-operated radio or television with batteries*	
Flashlight and batteries* (or chemical light sticks)	
Candle and matches in waterproof container	
small fire extinguisher	
Plastic bags: various sizes	
Duct tape	
Whistle	
Area road map: mark with locations and contact information of emergency shelters, hospitals etc.	
Compass	
Sewing kit	
Duffel bag or backpack	
Paper and pens/pencils	
Tarp	
Heavy duty plastic sheeting	
Blanket or sleeping bag	
Towels	
<b>Tools</b>	
Scissors	
Utility knife	
Basic toolkit: hammer, nails, screwdriver, screws, small saw	
Crowbar	
Ax	
Shovel	
Tent	
Coils of rope and wire	
<b>First Aid Supplies</b>	
First aid manual	
Prescription medications in original bottle*: carry actual prescription or letter from doctor, take in hand luggage, take enough for entire trip.	
Non-prescription medications used routinely*	
Surgical masks	
Latex gloves (or latex-free alternative if allergic)	
Instant heat and cold packs	
Thermometer	
Tweezers	
Ace bandages	
Cotton swabs	

<b>First Aid Supplies (continued)</b>	
Adhesive bandages: large, small, butterfly	
Gauze pads	
Adhesive tape	
Triangle bandage for slings etc.: cut a 48 inch square of unbleached muslin diagonally to make two triangle bandages	
Splint materials	
Spray bottle of 10% bleach solution: to disinfect objects and surfaces	
Antibiotic ointment	
Antiseptic (eg povidone - iodine)	
Alcohol swabs	
Burn lotion	
Cough and cold medication	
Antihistamines	
Asprin/other medicine to relieve fever and pain	
Antidiarrheal medication	
Laxatives	
Antacids	
Oral rehydration solution (ORS) for diarrhea/dehydration	
Insect repellent	
Sunscreen	
<b>Apparel</b>	
Change of clothing and footwear	
Pair of sturdy work shoes or boots	
Raingear	
Sunglasses	
Hat and gloves for cold weather	
Work gloves	
Laundry soap	
<b>Personal Items</b>	
Extra set of keys (house and vehicle)	
Copies of important papers: identification cards, passports, birth certificates, marriage licenses	
Travel insurance documentation	
Deodorant	
Lip balm	
Toothbrush and toothpaste	
Razors and shave cream	
Comb or hairbrush	
Menstrual products	
Birth control	
Soap	
Shampoo	
Extra eyeglasses	
Contact lens supplies	
Wet towelettes	
Portable "camp" toilet and supplies	
Large, heavy duty plastic bags and ties: for emergency sanitation	
Bucket with tight lid	
<b>Food and Water</b>	
Properly stored water: 1 gallon (4 liters) per person per day	
Nonperishable food	
Manual can opener	
Disposable utensils and dishware	
Resealable plastic bags	
Multivitamin to supplement nutrition	
Alcohol-based hand sanitizer	
Water purification supplies	

Entertainment	
Books	
Toys and games	
Family photos	
Special Needs: infants and toddlers	
Formula / baby food	
Diapers and wipes	
Pacifiers	
Pediatric medicines*: non-aspirin pain reliever, teething and diaper rash treatments	
Special Needs: older adults	
Easy-to-chew foods	
Hearing aid batteries*	
Denture accessories	

\* Refer to the additional details regarding storage of these items below

### Water storage

Ideally, you should have water stored in your home, workplace and vehicle. It's important to store it properly. Simply filling an empty bottle with tap water is inadequate. Regular beverage containers are not designed for long-term storage. They degrade over time, leeching chemicals into your water supply or springing leaks. Disease-causing germs can also develop in improperly stored water supplies.

Store water in a cool, dark place. Place containers on a wooden pallet or shelf, not on concrete floors. (Concrete may contaminate the water.) Aim to use store-bought, factory-sealed water containers designed for long-term storage. If you decide to fill your own containers, it's best to use food-grade containers specifically made for water storage. (Wash, sanitize and rinse them thoroughly before filling.) Avoid breakable containers and any container that has held toxic substances.

Treat tap water before storing. Mix in 8 drops of unscented liquid bleach per every gallon (3.8 liters) of water. Change the water in your container every 6 months. Discard any commercially-purchased water supply that has passed the expiration or "use by" date marked on the container.

### Food stockpiling

It's best to store healthy foods you already eat regularly. This can help maintain mental well-being during an emergency. Stockpile foods that do not need to be cooked or refrigerated. Consider special nutritional needs when preparing your supplies. Does anyone have allergies? Are there infants and toddlers to feed? Does anyone require special food (diabetics, pregnant and nursing women, elderly people)?

Store food in a dry, cool place. Keep perishable items like cookies and crackers in sealed containers. Limit the number of fatty or salty items in your stockpile. These foods are best avoided if your water supply is low.

Many foods only store well for six months to a year. Some notable exceptions, which can be stored indefinitely, include dry corn and pasta, soybeans, bouillon products and white rice. Replace your emergency food supply regularly. Simply use the "emergency" food for everyday meals, and replace it with newer items.

### About medications

Like food, emergency drug supplies should be regularly rotated. For prescription medicines and drugs you use routinely, this is easy. Buy an extra bottle or packet of the medication and place in storage. Next time you run out of your medicine, buy a new bottle. Place the new bottle in storage. Remove the older medicine from storage and use it.

### Batteries

Batteries can lose potency in storage. Use the medication rotation strategy described above to rotate your emergency battery supply.

### Further Information

Thorough disaster preparedness advice is available from many government sources. A few you may find useful:

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- Emergency Preparedness and You [website](#)
- Preparing for Disaster ([PDF document](#))

Red Cross Society: Food and Water in an Emergency [website](#)

Emergency Management Australia: Preparing for the Unexpected

### References

International SOS - Country Guides  
<http://www.internationalsos.com>

#### Disclaimer

This information has been developed for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Should you have questions or concerns about any topic described here, please consult your healthcare professional.