

### 8 STEPS TO GATHERING YOUR SHORT TERM FOOD SUPPLY

The process of gathering your short term food supply is as simple as creating a menu of the meals you and your family typically eat right now. Once you have the menu planned, pick up a few extra items each time you shop and gradually accumulate your food storage supply in a few months time. Storing what you eat right now is the most important aspect of your short term food storage plan.

Here is the basic process to easily prepare and implement your food storage program:

#### 1. CREATE A WEEKLY MENU:

- Begin by creating a weekly menu of the food your family typically eats in a week for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks.

#### 2. CREATE A MONTHLY MENU:

- Next, expand your weekly menu into a monthly menu plan. Take the time to actually write out what your family will eat for each meal for one month.

#### 3. CREATING YOUR LIST:

- From your monthly menu plan create a grocery list of items needed to prepare the meals you have planned for the month.
  - Identify the quantities of each food item required to prepare each meal.
- Include pantry staples such as flour, sugar, vegetable or olive oil, baking powder, baking soda, corn starch, yeast, salt, pepper and other spices you typically use.

#### 4. WORKING YOUR PLAN:

- Now that you have identified the list of foods and estimated quantities of each needed to fulfill your one month menu, assess what you already have in stock and create a list of additional items needed.
- Set a time frame in which to gradually accumulate your one month supply.
  - It can be as simple as buying a few extra items each time you go to the store over the next three months.
  - Always watch for sales and specials to save on the cost of your food storage.
  - The time frame should be comfortable and not put a financial strain on your budget.
  - Do not go into debt to accumulate your food storage.

**Continued On Next Page ►**

### 5. THREE MONTHS SUPPLY:

- Once you have accomplished your goal of gathering your one month supply, continue to accumulate additional items until you have stored a three (3) month supply of the foods you typically eat.
  - Basically, replicate your monthly menu three times.
  - You'll be surprised how often you actually eat the same things during the month.

### 6. FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:

- Canned fruits and vegetables:
  - To satisfy your need for fruits and vegetables as a component of your food storage program, consider purchasing canned fruits and vegetables.
  - Canned goods have a shelf life from one to five years.
  - They can be eaten out of the can and taste somewhat like fresh foods.
- Dehydrated or freeze dried food items:
  - Dehydrated or freeze dried food items have a much longer shelf life.
  - These foods can be used over an extended period of time in case of an emergency and if you are unable to obtain fresh or even canned fruits and vegetables.
  - Freeze dried or dehydrated meals are also good to have in storage.
  - These items are easily portable in the event of evacuation of your residence, whereas other food storage items would probably be left behind.

### 7. MEATS AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:

- Canned meats: If you are accustomed to eating meat consider storing canned chicken, turkey, fish and other forms of protein such as soy products.
- Soups and sauces are also good to store. Remember to choose a variety of foods.
- Treats and snack foods: These foods are a good source of energy and comfort.

### 8. ROTATE YOUR FOOD STORAGE:

- USE your food storage items as you normally would each month.
- Replenish the items you have used to maintain your storage supply.
- Choose the method you prefer to rotate your food storage:
  - First in – first out shelving: There is shelving available which allows easy storage of canned goods, making them accessible by a “first in/first out” method.
  - Simply write the date of purchase on the product package and use the oldest package first.

**Continued On Next Page ►**

## SHORT TERM FOOD STORAGE GUIDELINES

It is recommended by Homeland Security and other governmental organizations that each family have at least a two week supply of food and water. PrepareWell recommends you gradually increase your supplies until you have three months of basic foods and commodities set aside which your family is accustomed to eating. The concept is to build a small supply of food which is part of your normal, everyday diet. An easy approach is to purchase a few extra items each week to build a one-week supply of food storage; then a two week supply. Gradually increase your supply until it is sufficient for one month and then three months. These items should be rotated regularly to avoid spoilage.

Familiar foods can lift morale and give a feeling of security in time of stress and emotional strain, so store the types of foods you typically eat now. Many canned foods do not require cooking, water or special preparation, so they'll be easy to use if electricity or other means of cooking are not readily available. Have an extra month's supply of critical medications and special foods which may be required to meet individual circumstances.

The secret to establishing a short term as well as a long term food and water supply is to be systematic in your approach. Keep it simple and within your means. By building your supply slowly you can avoid financial strain. Becoming self reliant is a process and not a one time shopping spree to the emergency preparedness store. Be wise as you store food and water. Follow established guidelines given here and from other reliable sources as to how best to store the food you accumulate. Do not go to extremes; it is not prudent to go into debt. The best approach is to be consistently working toward your goal of eventually assembling a three month supply of food and water. As you approach your food storage program in this manner, it will make sense to you and your family. It will be achievable in a short period of time. Involve your family in the food storage planning process. Help them understand why it is important and how they can help. They will enjoy knowing that some of their favorite foods are being held in store for them in case of emergency. They will take confidence in knowing their family is prepared should an emergency situation occur.

Here are some guidelines in storing your short term food supply as recently published by Homeland Security:

- Keep food in a dry, cool place – a dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans carefully, so you can close them tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in tight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker. Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.
- Consider building a special storage area or pantry for your supplies.

In addition to the foods you would normally eat, consider storing these other recommended foods in your three month supply:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables. (Be sure to include a manual can opener)
- Canned juices, milk and soup (if powdered, store extra water).
- High energy foods, such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail mix.
- Comfort foods, such as hard candy, sweetened cereals, candy bars and cookies.
- Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets, if necessary.

**Continued On Next Page ►**

### SHORT TERM FOOD STORAGE GUIDELINES (CONTINUED)

- Compressed food bars. They store well, are lightweight, taste good and are nutritious.
- Trail mix. It is available as a prepackaged product or you can assemble your own.
- Dried foods. They can be nutritious and satisfying, but some have a high salt content, which promotes thirst. •
- Read the label.
- Freeze-dried foods. They are tasty and lightweight, but will need water for reconstitution.
- Instant Meals. Cups of noodles or cups of soup are a good addition, although they need water for reconstitution.
- Snack-sized canned goods. Good because they generally have pull-top lids or twist-open keys.
- Prepackaged beverages. Those in foil packets and foil-lined boxes are suitable because they are tightly sealed and will keep for a long time.

### SUMMARY

Rotation of your food storage items will keep the products fresh and avoid spoilage. There are many techniques of rotating the products you store. Look for specially designed storage shelving which allows for canned goods to rotate. Another method is marking the date purchased on the cans and use the oldest first. What ever method works best for your family in keeping your food storage organized and refreshed is the one you should focus on and consistently use.

**Notes:**