

Water // The First Step for Family Preparedness



WATER

THE FIRST STEP
TO FAMILY
PREPAREDNESS

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Want to build up your family's emergency supplies, but not sure where to start? A great first step is to store water. Find out how to get started here!

The human body is made up of 65 percent water, and it is necessary for our existence. Water helps our blood flow, carries oxygen and nutrients to our cells, flushes waste products from our body and even cushions our tissues and joints. It is also a critical component in food digestion. Water is fundamental for our daily life.

Providing for our water needs in the event of a disaster becomes a top priority, as water may have been interrupted or contaminated. Each person will need at least 1 gallon of water per day. For home storage, you should have at least a 2-week supply of water available for each person for drinking and sanitation. Water should be stored in food-grade containers such as glass jars, metal or plastic containers. Previously used juice and milk containers are not acceptable, as food proteins are difficult to remove, and the grade of plastic might not be adequate.

Treatments may be necessary if water is from a non-sterile source. Suggested methods are:

- **Heat treatment**-boil water 5-10 minutes. Use water bath processing for glass jars.
- **Chemical treatment**– Unscented Chlorine Treatment –8 drops per gallons (less than 1/8 tsp), or 2 drops per quart. Let stand for 30 minutes. For cloudy water, use 24 drops per 2 gallons (4 drops per quart). If still cloudy, repeat, let stand 15 minutes, and dispose if still cloudy. Water should have a slight bleach odor. If not, repeat and wait another 15 minutes. The treated water can then be made palatable by pouring it between clean containers several times.

Nearly all available liquid chlorine bleach is now **concentrated**. Amounts that are required for treatment are less than in previous years. Beware of expiration dates. If the bottle of bleach is older than 4 months, it should not be used as a water purifying agent. Bleach will dissipate after 1 year.

- **Other forms of treatment** are iodine, water purification tablets, distillation and filtration. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) has recently approved the use of colloidal silver in low doses for maintaining microbiological quality of stored water.

Additional emergency sources of water may be: Potable water from pipes, water heater, ice cube trays and beverages. **Do not** use water from swimming pools, toilet tanks or waterbeds for drinking. Chemicals have been added to these, making them unsafe.

When potable (drinkable) water is properly disinfected and stored in ideal conditions, it should have an indefinite shelf life. To maintain the optimum quality, water should be rotated every 6 months.

Water storage is the first important step to preparedness. It is cost effective and something you can do today. Begin by storing in small containers, then work toward the 50-gallon barrels. These should not be stored on the dirt or direct concrete, as they will absorb odors. Containers that are filled from the tap (city water) will not need treatments.

This article was written by Carolyn Washburn, USU Professor