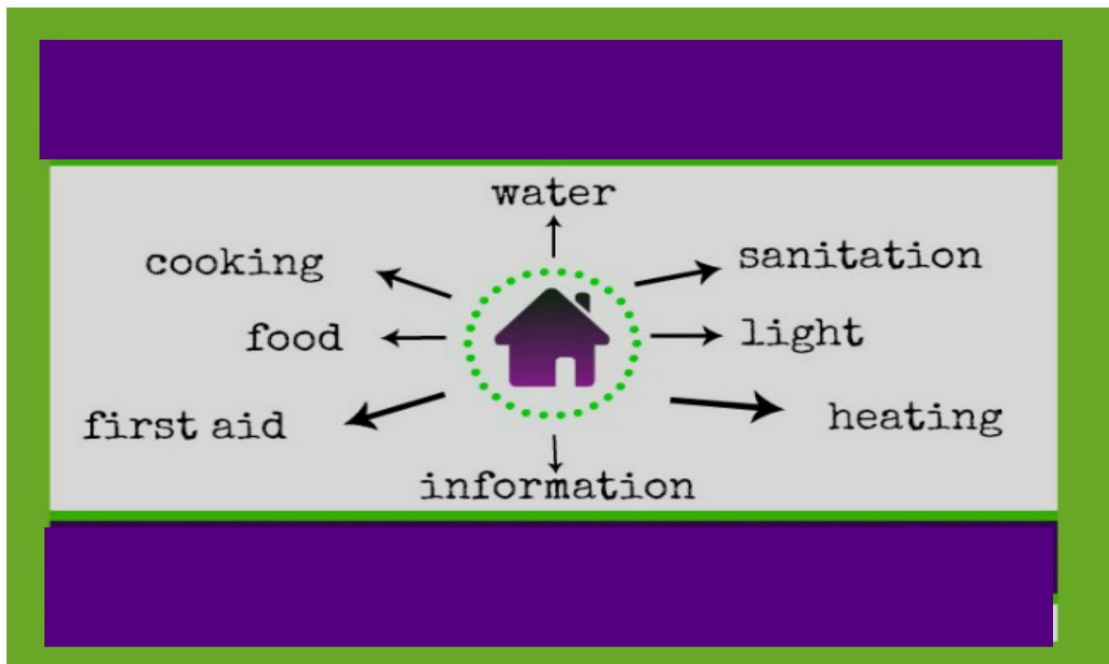


# A Quick-Start Guide for New Preppers Who Want to be Ready **RIGHT NOW**



Priorities, Checklists, and Resources

*by Daisy Luther*

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# **A Quick-Start Guide for New Preppers Who Want to be Ready RIGHT NOW**

When you first start prepping you want everything RIGHT NOW. You look around your home and see nothing but shortcomings. You don't have enough food, you don't have a woodstove, you have no secondary water source...that's it. You and your family are doomed.

You feel a panicked urgency because you've learned just enough to know that you are NOT prepared. You know that there are all sorts of supplies that you need, but if you're like most of us, you're on a budget. Very few of us can afford to buy everything we need all at once.

## **Here's a guide**

Stop panicking. Take a deep breath. You can devote yourself to getting prepared without breaking the bank.

So, a common question is, if you have to split up your purchases, how do you prioritize your supplies? How can you create a sensible supply quickly before an impending crisis occurs?

The recommendations in this guide for new preppers will help speed you through the preparedness process. Wherever possible, use items that you already have. Consider this a checklist of what you need and fulfill it as you can. In each category there will be a range of options, including some freebies whenever possible, as well as reading material on the subject.

Please keep in mind, the following doesn't provide you with a year's supply of anything. It will get you through most short-term disasters with aplomb, though. Once you have this foundation in place, you can spend time and money building upon it.

Here is [a link to a resource page](#) that will direct you to the most updated products at the best price.

## Water

Water is near and dear to my heart, so much so that I wrote a book on the topic. (It's called *The Prepper's Water Survival Guide* and you can find it on Amazon.)

I always put water at the top of the list, because without it, you'll be dead in 3 short days. The need for an emergency water supply isn't always the result of a down grid disaster. Recently, we tapped into our emergency water when the well pump broke.

Some places have had water emergencies when the municipal supply was contaminated by stuff like industrial spills or agricultural run-off. Floods and bad storms can also sometimes cause the water supply to be tainted.

- **Use containers you have RIGHT NOW and fill them with water from the tap.** Put the lid on and stash them away. Don't use milk jugs or juice jugs for drinking water, but you can use them for sanitation water in a pinch. If you can get your hands on some empty, clean 2-liter soda bottles, that will be perfect. We don't drink soda, so we have some of the 1-gallon water bottles from the store.
- **Buy some filled 5-gallon jugs of purified water.** How much you need should be based on the number of family members. The rule of thumb is 1 gallon per person, per day, but you may find you need a lot more than that when you add in pets and sanitation needs. You may be able to find these less expensively, already filled at the store. When I lived in Canada you could pick up a filled jug for less than \$10, but California has all sorts of environmental rules that make these containers more expensive here. Another option is the 7-gallon Aquatainer that is designed for easy stacking. (Be sure to put this in a place where the floor can support the weight of a bunch of heavy water containers.)

- **Have a way to dispense the water from the jugs.** We have a top-loading water dispenser for use in emergencies. These MUST be top loading because the bottom-loading ones require electricity to run the pump.) If you don't want to make that kind of investment, you can pick up a nifty little manual pump for less than \$15.
- **Get a gravity-fed water filter.** I have a Big Berkey and ProPur, but those are hefty investments when you're trying to get everything at once. If you can't swing that, buy Jim Cobb's *Prepper's Survival Hacks* book. It has numerous DIY water filters that you can make without spending a fortune.

## Cooking methods

If the power goes out, how will you cook? You need the ability to boil water, at the very least. If you can boil water, then you can heat up canned food or prepare freeze-dried food in an emergency. Here are some secondary cooking methods, some of which you may already have.

- **Wood stove or fireplace.** If you heat with wood, you're a step ahead already, at least in the midst of a winter power outage. However, you won't want to fire up the wood stove to cook in the summer, particularly since you may already be battling the heat without a fan or air conditioner.
- **Gas kitchen stove.** Some kitchen stoves that use gas or propane can be used without electricity while others can't. (If you're replacing your stove, this is definitely a quality you'll want to look for.)
- **Outdoor barbecue.** If weather allows, you can fire up your propane or charcoal barbecue during a power outage and cook your feast outdoors.
- **Rocket stove.** There are all sorts of little emergency stoves out there which are designed to boil water quickly and without the use of a great deal of fuel. My favorites are the Volcano 3-way stove and the Kelly Kettle. You can also make an efficient stove. [We made one last week that brought water to boil in less than 4 minutes.](#)

***Do not risk*** using emergency stoves designed for camping, indoors, unless the manufacturer specifically says that it can be used indoors. To do so is to risk fire, smoke damage, or carbon monoxide poisoning.

## **Food**

Emergency food comes in many different forms. The first thing you have to look at is cooking methods, which we discussed above. The food you choose needs to be able to be prepared using the method you have available now, not the one you plan to get in the future.

Another important note is that your emergency food supply should be nutritious. You won't want to fill up on empty calories when you may be making greater demands of your body. Keep in mind food restrictions, too, because an emergency situation is bad enough without an allergic reaction or intolerance illness.

There are several different ways to create a food supply.

- **See what you have.** Go through your kitchen cupboards and see what you already have that could be used in an emergency. Things like nut butters, crackers, and other no-cook snacks are great options. Canned foods that only require heating are good as well. Instant rice or noodles can be added to your emergency supply. Group these items together on a special shelf or in a Rubbermaid container so that they are available when you need them. Figure out how long your supply would last your family before you go and purchase more.
- **Figure out what shelf-stable items you need to add to balance out your supply.** (Perhaps dried or canned fruit and vegetables, canned meat, jerky, etc., would provide more nutrients and variety.)
- **Emergency buckets.** The very fastest way to create an instant food supply is emergency buckets of freeze-dried food, which require only the ability to boil water to prepare.

One caveat: do not go with the cheapest thing you can find. Some of those taste absolutely terrible. As well, they're loaded with unhealthy chemicals and sodium. If you normally eat very healthfully, then move to MSG-laden freeze-dried meals, you're not going to feel well at all in an emergency.

- **My very favorite brand of emergency food is [Numanna](#), found [HERE](#).** It's surprisingly tasty, contains no GMOs, no MSG, and no Aspartame. They even have [gluten-free products](#), which is important to my family since we have some pretty severe intolerances. ([Here's my review of one of their products.](#)) These are already prepacked to last for 25 years and are a crucial part of my long-term food supply.
- **Build a pantry.** Make a list of what you need to feed your family for a month without a trip to the store, and without reliance on long cooking times. (This rules out beans and rice for most people.) Learn more about building a pantry that will see you through a variety of emergencies (including personal financial crises) in my book, *The Pantry Primer: A Prepper's Guide to Whole Food on a Half Price Budget*.

## Heat

If you live in a cold climate, winter weather during a power outage can be a life-threatening emergency. It's vital to have the ability to stay warm if the power goes out. Most central heating systems require electricity to run the fan or motors. Here are some options for secondary heat sources if you generally rely on your central heating system.

- **Wood Heat:** Everyone's favorite off-grid heating method is a fireplace or wood stove. The fuel is renewable and you have the added bonus of an off-grid cooking method. Unfortunately, if your home doesn't already have one, it can be a pretty expensive thing to install. If you rent, it's probably not going to be an option at all to add wood heat to someone else's property. If you have wood

heat, make sure you have a good supply of seasoned firewood that is well-protected from the elements.

- **Propane Heaters:** There are several propane heaters on the market that do not require electricity. I own a **Little Buddy** heater. These small portable heaters are considered safe for indoor use in 49 states. They attach to a small propane canister and use 2 oz. of fuel per hour to make 100 square feet extremely warm and toasty.
- **Get a carbon monoxide detector.** A battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm provides an extra measure of safety when using these heaters indoors. Be sure to stock up on propane if this is your back-up heat method.
- **Kerosene/Oil Heaters:** Kerosene heaters burn a wick for heat, fueled by the addition of heating oil. These heaters really throw out the warmth. A brand new convection kerosene heater can heat up to 1000 square feet efficiently. When we lived in the city I was lucky enough to have an antique "[Perfection](#)" oil heater, which was a charming addition to our decor that was be called into service during grid-down situations. Click [here](#) to read more information about the different types of kerosene heaters that are available.
- **Natural Gas Fireplaces:** Some gas-fueled fireplaces will work when the electrical power goes out – they just won't blow out heat via the fan.
- **Pellet Stove:** Most pellet stoves require electricity to run, but there are a few of these high efficiency beauties that will work without being plugged in.

If you have no additional heat at all, you can usually keep one room tolerable for 2-3 days. If the cold is relentless and the outage lasts longer than that, you may need to seek other shelter.

Watch your temperatures. If the daytime temperature in the house dips below 40 degrees, the night time temperature will be even colder, and it won't be safe to stay there, especially if you

have children or family members who are more susceptible to illness.

These methods can help you stay cozier during a storm.

- **Heat only one room.** One year, our furnace went out the day before Christmas. We huddled into a small room with just one window. We closed the door to the bedroom and used a folded quilt at the bottom to better insulate the room. If you don't have a door to the room you've opted to take shelter in, you can hang heavy quilts or blankets in the doorways to block it off from the rest of the house.
- **Cover your windows.** You can use a plastic shower curtain and duct tape, topped by a heavy quilt to keep the wind from whistling through your windows. Take down the quilt if it's sunny outside for some solar gain, then cover it back up as dark falls. If you have reason to be concerned about OPSEC (OPerational SECurity - keeping your preps private), use heavy black garbage bags to cover the windows to keep light from escaping.
- **Light candles.** Even the small flames from candles can add warmth to a small area. Be sure to use them safely by keeping them out of the reach of children and housing them in holders that won't tip over easily.
- **Use kerosene lamps.** Those charming old-fashioned lamps can also add warmth to the room.
- **Use sleeping bags.** Cocooning in a sleeping bag conserves body heat better than simply getting under the covers.
- **Have a camp-out.** This works especially well when you have children because it adds an element of fun to an otherwise stressful situation. Pitch a tent in your closed off room, get inside with a flashlight, and tell stories. When you combine your body heat in a tiny space like that, you'll stay much warmer.
- **Get cooking.** If you have a propane or gas stove in the kitchen, your cooking method may not require electricity. So bake a cake, roast a turkey, or simmer a



soup. You can use it to warm the room while making a hot, delicious feast.

- **Heat some rocks.** Do you have a place outdoors for a campfire? If so, put some large rocks around the edges of it. They retain heat for hours. When it's bedtime, carefully place the rocks into a cast iron Dutch oven and bring this into the room you're going to be sleeping in. Be sure to protect your floor or surface from the heat of the Dutch oven. The stones will passively emit heat for several hours without the potential of a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning during the night.

## Sanitation

Another thing that can quickly become dire is personal sanitation. Depending on your situation, you may not have running water or flushing toilets. You need to stock up on supplies to make the best of these situations and keep family members healthy.

- **Baby wipes.** You can never have enough baby wipes. Stock up on these for hand-washing after using the bathroom, before and after food prep, and before eating. They can also be used to wipe down surfaces. You can learn more about [hand and surface hygiene when there is no running water HERE](#).
- **Cleaning supplies.** You still have to keep your home reasonably clean when there is no running water to help prevent illness and disease. You can [find some cleaning hacks HERE](#).
- **Personal waste.** You have to have a plan to deal with personal waste when the toilet won't flush. [This article tells you how to make a human kitty litter toilet](#), a very inexpensive solution to the personal waste issue. Waste must be handled very carefully to avoid the spread of disease and illness.

Here are the items I recommend that you keep on hand for water emergencies:

- Disposable disinfecting wipes
- Super absorbent paper towels
- Basins (I keep quite a few plastic dishpans on hand. You'll find a million uses for them!)
- Baby wipes (These can be used for hand washing and personal hygiene.)
- Your regular spray cleaner (Ours is vinegar and [orange essential oil](#))
- Kitty litter. This soaks up messes, and helps to absorb odor. (If your toilet won't flush because you're on a city sewer system, it can also be used as a makeshift toilet. This [serious concern is discussed here.](#))

## Light

Lighting is absolutely vital, especially if there are children in the house. Nothing is more frightening than being completely in the dark during a stressful situation. Fortunately, it's one of the easiest things to plan for, as well as one of the least expensive.

Some lighting solutions are:

- Garden stake solar lights
- Long-burning candles
- Kerosene lamp and fuel
- Flashlights (don't forget batteries)
- Hand crank/solar lantern
- Don't forget matches or lighters

## Tools and supplies

Some basic items will make your life much easier during an emergency. Here are some things that are essential in the event of a power outage:

- Lighter/waterproof matches
- Batteries in various sizes

- Manual can opener
- Basic tools: Pliers, screwdriver, wrench, hammer
- Duct tape
- Super glue
- Sewing kit
- Bungee cords

If you'd like to expand on the basic supplies, a more detailed list of tools and hardware can be found [HERE](#).

## **First Aid kit**

It's important to have a basic first aid kit on hand at all times, but particularly in the event of an emergency. Your kit should include basic wound care items like bandages, antibiotic ointments, and sprays. As well, if you use them, keep on hand a supply of basic over-the-counter medications, like pain relief capsules, cold medicine, cough syrup, anti-nausea pills, and allergy medication. Be sure to have a couple of good medical guides on hand. [Go check out the resource list to get some suggestions.](#)

## **Special needs**

This is something that will be unique to every family. Consider the things that are needed on a daily basis in your household. It might be prescription medications, diapers, or special foods. If you have pets, you'll need supplies for them too. The best way to figure out what you need is to jot things down as you use them over the course of a week or so.

## **Other Stuff**

As you continue along your preparedness journey, you'll find that there are other items that are very important to you. For example, you'll want to build yourself [a bug-out bag](#) for possible evacuations.

And don't be surprised when this mindset creates within you the itch to be more self-reliant, which means you'll be adding gardening tools, sewing supplies, woodworking tools, and other supplies to your stockpile.

Another aspect of preparedness that is often overlooked in the beginning of the journey is the ability to protect your home and family. If you aren't already of this mindset, the idea of bringing home a firearm can be overwhelming. When you're ready to learn more about personal protection and home defense, [go HERE and read this article](#).

### **Add These to Your Library**

Hard copy books are excellent references. I recommend that newbie preppers purchase the following to keep them motivated to become more prepared.

- *The Prepper's Blueprint* by Tess Pennington
- *The Prepper's Water Survival Guide* by Daisy Luther
- *Prepper's Survival Hacks* by Jim Cobb
- *The Pantry Primer: A Prepper's Guide to Whole Food on a Half Price Budget* by Daisy Luther
- *Prepper's Natural Medicine* by Cat Ellis

### **You've got this!**

You're going to do some list-writing, so grab a notebook and pen.

- **Write a master list.** Now, based on this article, go through and write a list of the things that you feel are important for your family's preparedness plan. Include the things that you already have. Organize your list by checking off the things you have.
- **Organize the supplies that you have into "kits".** I have Rubbermaid tubs labeled with the contents for emergency purposes, sorted into kits for things like pandemic supplies, off-grid lighting, batteries and power supplies, etc.

- **Now write a minimalist list of the first things that you *must* have for survival.** Don't worry if you can't get everything at once. Start off by covering all of the bases with a skeleton kit that will get you by. This list might include some food that doesn't require cooking (thus eliminating the immediate need for a secondary cooking method), a way to keep warm, water, a kitty litter toilet, and some baby wipes.
- **Finally, write the big list.** This is a list of the things mentioned in the article that you want to own. Make a copy of the list and keep it in your wallet so that if you happen by a thrift store or yard sale, you know what you need. As your budget allows, pick up one or two of these items per week. These may be higher ticket items so don't worry if it takes you a while to get them. You've gotten the bare necessities, so these items will just add to your already sturdy foundation of preparedness.

Most of all, don't panic.

Start with your basics in each category and add to it as your time and budget allow.

You'll be prepared in no time at all.