

## **EXTENDED EMERGENCIES**

In the event of a major disaster such as an earthquake, major flooding, or other disruptions of the general system of goods and services, we have to be prepared to provide our own support for the necessities of life which are food, water, shelter, clothing, first-aid and protection (self-defense).

### **Food:**

Supermarkets receive new product daily, and often times, they receive more than one daily delivery. It is estimated that a standard supermarket will rotate a preponderance of it's stock every four days. In the event of an emergency, that stock can be depleted within 24 hours as people rush to the store for food. Depending on the duration of the event, you could need to feed yourself from your own stored food for a considerable time. When considering food storage, there are two main things that have to be taken into consideration - shelf life and ease of preparation.

### **Food Shelf Life:**

Most people will have a supply of food items available in their refrigerator and pantry. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that a refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours if full and 24 hours if it is half full if the door remains closed. In the event of a prolonged power loss, the frozen items should be prepared and consumed.

### **Immediate Use Items**

If the power is out, you will not have a microwave, electric range or other methods of heating food that require electricity and heat. Check the items in the freezer and find the ones that are already cooked and just require heating. These should be safe to eat until they are completely defrosted due to the lack of refrigeration. Once you pass this time limit, you should dispose of any remaining food items that required refrigeration or freezing. Don't risk adding food poisoning to the emergency situation.

### **Short Shelf Life Items**

The items in the pantry are most likely to be perishable, short shelf life items that are boxed or in plastic bags. These should be the next series of items to be consumed. This food supply could last from a few days to a couple of weeks depending on when you last purchased food. Again, food preparation must be considered. Boxed breakfast cereal can be eaten dry, boxed macaroni and cheese can't. Again, check the expiration dates on items and do not eat the ones that are past their date, or from cans that are dented or swollen. Once those items are depleted, you will need to rely on long shelf life food.

### **Long Shelf Life Items**

Canned items and items sealed in air tight containers that do not require refrigeration are the items with the longest shelf life. Canned meats, breads, fruits and vegetables, and liquids like canned broth and milk normally have a shelf life of approximately two years. Some emergency supply companies also prepare items that are packed in nitrogen and can have a shelf life of up to 25 years. Dried items, such as rice and pasta, that are sealed in air and water tight type packaging also have an extended shelf life. Try to keep the items simple. Combining a can of meat with a package of noodles or rice can make a nourishing one pot meal.

### **Food Storage:**

One of the first considerations is where you will store your emergency food. Stocking up on large cans of food is not a viable option if you only have space for small cans. Your initial supply of emergency food should be kept in your house. It can be kept in your cupboards or in a closet. An additional larger supply should be kept in another building or multiple locations. The adage "Don't keep all of your eggs in one basket" applies here. Having a months supply of food in your house will do you no good if your house is the first building that is destroyed.