PREPAREDNESS: STAPLE FOODS

When it comes to planning and storing food for an emergency, it is important to consider each of the following needs:

- alleviating the feeling of being hungry
- providing essential salt, sugar, and protein needs for energy
- meeting as many nutritional objectives as possible

This week's focus is building a supply of basic, staple foods. These kinds of foods can normally be purchased in bulk quantities for a relatively small investment and can go a long way in preventing hunger, even during prolonged periods of emergency. Additionally, they generally have a long shelf life; and, if stored properly, can even last as long as 10 to 20 years. While not meeting all of the nutritional needs in a long-term diet, these foods are a great starting point if you are just beginning your emergency planning and storage. Here are some examples of staple foods...

Breakfast: Oatmeal, grits, rolled oats

Dinner & Supper: Rice, spaghetti noodles, ramen noodles, etc.

All of these foodstuffs can be prepared with nothing but boiling water; and, while they may not have much flavor in and of themselves, there are many choices of salts, sugars, seasonings, fruits, vegetables, and proteins that can be added to them for flavor.

Storage: All of these items will come normally in bags or boxes. If stored in a cool, dry place, these items will usually keep for weeks or months just as they are when purchased. For longer term, these foods can be opened and poured into airtight containers to prevent insects, moisture, and other contaminants from ruining them. For optimal storage, consider purchasing 5 gallon pails that you will fill with the food, along with an oxygen absorber packet on top before sealing closed. Do not consume contaminated foods.

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