



# Ready for disaster?

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## **Are you ready for a** disaster?

It can strike any time, even if you are not ready for it (and you won't be). Such an emergency may not strike today as you read this... but then again, it might. Are you ready? What will you do?

What kind of disaster might we face. Floods have struck our communities, as have landslides and forest fires. How about a chemical spill, or an earthquake? Both pretty likely. And infectious disease can spread very quickly and disable a community. Are you ready?

Planning for a disaster does not mean it will happen, nor that we are being pessimistic. It just means that should some horrendous event strike, we are in the best position to survive. Indeed, being prepared reflects an optimism that you and your family will come through an emergency. And being prepared means you may be able to help others when the time comes.

During a disaster it is probable that services you take for granted will not be available.

this could be for a day or two, or for much longer periods up to a week or more. Electricity, gas and water utilities may be out of commission, as might telephone service, gas stations and stores.

Setting up a family emergency preparedness plan can mitigate the effects of the disaster, and may well save lives. The key is to be ready when something happens (not if, but when). Each member of the family should know what they need to do and who is responsible for what. A good communication plan includes having a local gathering place. Have two or three places to go to if you cannot get to or stay home. Try a community centre, church, school or nearby relative.

Having an out-of-town person as a central contact means everyone can reconnect: "Uncle Frank in Alber-

ta" can act as the information clearing house for your family as you try to reconnect.

A first aid kit is key to being prepared, and having one or more family members take first aid and CPR courses will also make a difference. First Aid supplies should include a stock of prescription medications sealed and stored in the refrigerator.

Other supplies to have ready are drinking water, non-perishable food that needs no refrigeration and little or no water. Canned meats, fruits and vegetables, juices, honey, peanut butter, crackers and cereal all offer nutrition without a lot of preparation. Food should include special foods for infants, elderly or those requiring special diets. Better include some pet food, too. Round out the kit with a manual can opener and disposable plates and utensils. And include a battery or hand-powered radio and flashlight (all with fresh/spare batteries naturally).

There are many resources available to save you "reinventing the wheel." Local governments all have information to help you

plan. Online, look to "[Get Prepared;](#)" there are plenty of other sources for this information as well.

The underlying theme to being ready in case of a disaster is that you could well be the only one available to look after yourself or your family. Either emergency services will not be available immediately, or they will be busy with more serious cases.

These are but a few ideas for becoming ready, more of a reminder, actually. Being prepared could make a very big difference on how your family survives a disaster.

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