

Home Stockpiling of Food and Essential Items

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Note: Every Save the Children office will have different foods available at local groceries and markets. IPPs should assist staff in adapting this basic list to the available foods in the area. Pre-prepared foods that require no cooking (for example, peanut butter), will provide nutritional value and store well over time. Additionally, staff should consider how to prepare foods that are not ready-to-eat. Burners, stoves, charcoal, wood, etc. should be considered and added to this list, as appropriate to the area. Please send comments, suggestions for improvement, and questions to Kathryn Bolles at kbolles@savechildren.org.

You and your family can take steps to lessen the impact of a potential influenza pandemic by stockpiling food and other essential items. The checklist below will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic. As of March 2006, the world is in Phase 3 of the WHO stages of a pandemic alert with the H5N1 (Avian Flu) virus. Phase 3 means that there are some cases of human infection with H5N1, but only very limited human-to-human transmission.

Some experts recommend that individuals and families begin stockpiling essential items now for the following reasons: 1. supply systems will likely not function normally in a pandemic and basic items may not be available; 2. an increase in the pandemic alert may cause an overflow of people at markets and stores seeking the same items resulting in a stock-out; 3. in the event of a pandemic wave of illness, it will be important to avoid crowds, such as marketplaces; and 4. some family members may be ill and unable to leave the house to procure these key items. Save the Children suggests that staff and families consider this option to stockpile now, and strongly recommends that all staff stockpile if the pandemic alert increases to Phase 4.

Experts recommend that households consider stockpiling a 6-week supply of essential items.

Food items

Since no single food item contains all the nutrients a person needs, it is wise to store items from each food group. Consider the circumstances of family members when deciding which foods to store (e.g., the age, gender, and activity of the individuals in the family). In order for food storage to sustain an individual/family during influenza pandemic, dry foods need to be low in moisture, good quality, and insect free. Keep all food away from heat and moisture. The following products are excellent to store because of their ability to retain flavor and nutritional value:

1. grains (wheat, rice, corn, rolled oats, pasta)
2. legumes (dry beans, peas, lentils)
3. powdered milk
4. sugar or honey
5. cooking oil
6. salt
7. food items specific for children under 2, if applicable
8. water (and chlorine to purify water)

Non-Food Items

1. Make sure that you have adequate supplies of any essential prescription medicines that you need.
2. soap and water, or hand-sanitizer
3. medicines for fever or pain
4. thermometer
5. fluids with electrolytes (for example, packets of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS))
6. cleansing materials (alcohol, chlorine)
7. flashlight and/or candles
8. batteries
9. battery-operated radio
10. disposable bags for garbage
11. any materials you need to work from home
12. tissues, toilet paper
13. latex or rubber gloves
14. generator, if available and affordable

(Guidance adapted from Pandemic Influenza Planning: A Guide for Individuals and Families, www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/guide.pdf; and Provident Living, Food Storage and Emergency Preparedness.)