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COVID-19 Pandemic Preparedness: Home Stockpiling of Food and Other Essential Items

Every Save the Children office will have different foods available at local groceries and markets. Point Persons in each office 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 kbolles@savechildren.org.

The coronavirus is evolving rapidly, and it is time for you and your family to take steps to lessen the impact of a potential severe pandemic by stockpiling food and other essential items, in case items are in short supply or not available easily in your community. The checklist below will help you gather the information and resources you may need:

Some experts have recommended that individuals and families stockpile essential items for the following reasons:

1. Supply systems will likely not function normally in a severe pandemic and basic items may not be available when you need them;
2. A severe pandemic may cause an overflow of people at markets and stores seeking the same items, resulting in stock-outs;
3. In the event of a pandemic wave of severe 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.

Experts have recommended 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, sex, and activity of the individuals in the family). In order for food storage to sustain an individual/family during a pandemic wave of approximately 6 weeks, 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/or tablets or chlorine to purify water)
9. ready-to-eat bars (e.g. cereal bars, protein bars) and snacks

10. high-protein and nutrient foods your family likes, such as jars of peanut butter and cans of vegetables and legumes

Non-Food Items

1. Make sure that you have adequate supplies of any essential prescription medicines that you need, including vitamins
2. soap and water, AND adequate hand-sanitizer for every household member
3. medicines for fever or pain
4. thermometers
5. fluids with electrolytes (for example, packets of powdered Oral Rehydration Solution like Gatorade)
6. cleansing materials (alcohol, chlorine), wipes and/or for surfaces
7. flashlights and/or candles
8. batteries
9. battery-operated radio
10. disposable bags for garbage
11. any materials you and your family need to work/do schoolwork from home
12. tissues, toilet paper, sanitary products (tampons, diapers)
13. latex or non-latex rubber gloves
14. extra chargers for mobile phones, smart phones, and consider an extra basic mobile phone for emergency calls
15. home generator, if available and affordable
16. mental health tools: activities, toys, games, books, yoga mats, or other relaxing/stress-releasing options for your family members