

Preparedness 7 Day Challenge

Day 1: LIGHTS OUT – Cyber Attack

A CYBER ATTACK HAS STRUCK YOUR COUNTRY. Power has been shut down completely across the entire country. Cell phone towers were also hit in the attack so communication will be a struggle. Today we will cook, survive, and entertain ourselves without electricity for the entire day!

PRACTICE:

- You must survive today with no electricity. If you have a generator please consider that it is **BROKEN** for this scenario so you can practice all of the below tasks.
- You must cook all of your meals without using electricity, you can cook outdoors or indoors (if you have a gas stove pretend it is broken, that's cheating).
- No using the **INTERNET** or your cell phone today, even if you have solar chargers.
- You can't heat or cool your home using electricity.
- Only use non-electric light sources (candles, flashlights, etc.)
- Entertain your kids (and yourself) with no tv or internet ... say what?
- **ADVANCED OPTION:** Pretend your power has been off for several days and cook only using pantry foods (nothing from the fridge or freeze)

EVALUATE:

Inventory your resources for surviving a powerless emergency. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- **Cooking Appliances:** Do you have a way to cook food indoors? Do you have a solar cooking option to conserve fuel? Can you easily boil water? Do you know how to cook with your powerless cooking tools? (view powerless cooking class here)
- **Cooking Fuel:** How much of each fuel do you have stored? How many meals can you cook with what you have stored? What is your plan for if/when you run out?
- **Light:** What light sources do you have? Where are they located? Do you have spare batteries for flashlights? Do you have a way to charge solar lanterns? Are your matches stored with your candles? Does your family know where to find these items?
- **Heating/Cooling:** How will you stay warm without power? How will you stay cool without power? Do you have battery powered fans? Portable heaters?
- **Communication:** How will you contact your family if you don't have access to the cell phone network? Do you have a plan for how to get everyone home safely? Do you have a landline or HAM radio for communication? Walkie talkies to use in close range?

- **Generators:** While we didn't want to use generators today, it is worth thinking about them as a legitimate preparedness item. Do you have one? Do you want one? Do you want solar or some other fuel? How do you store fuel? What can you power with one? How will you use it in an emergency?

Day 2: UH OH, NO H2O – Train Derailment

A TRAIN HAS BEEN DERAILED NEXT TO YOUR LOCAL WATER SOURCE. Hazardous materials spilled into the water causing it to be contaminated. All of the water coming into your house is affected and not safe to drink or use for washing. It's not recommended to use it even after boiling or purifying. You CAN actually flush toilets though! Can you survive today with no water?

PRACTICE:

- **You must survive today using only stored water for all your drinking, cooking, and washing needs. If you have a well, please revise the scenario to your well water being contaminated.**
- **Shut off the main water line to your house so that the contaminated water doesn't reach your pipes.**
- **Only drink your stored water today, feel free to add some drink powders if it tastes a bit stale.**
- **Cook all of your meals without using your tap water.**
- **You can use your toilets but since your water is shut off you must flush with stored water (try to use old cleaning water to avoid waste)**
- **Take a shower or bath using stored water (Don't cheat and skip this one!) Bonus points if you bathe little children too. I've had minimal success with solar camp showers in the past. Good luck!**
- **ADVANCED TASK: You have no clean clothes at this time, do some LAUNDRY today without using your washing machine or dryer.**

EVALUATE:

Inventory your resources for surviving without running water. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- **Water Storage:** How much water did you use today? How many days' worth of water do you have stored? Can you easily access the stored water? Do you have water stored on each floor of your house? Do you have it in various sizes of containers? What are your options when the water runs out? Do you have containers that can be used to transport water from a distance?
- **Water Filter/Purification:** Do you have a water purifier? Do you have a water filter? Do you know when to use which one? How many gallons can you purify? Do you have the ability (and fuel) to boil water for purification?
- **Sanitation:** What is your plan for using the bathroom in an emergency? Will you go outside? Go inside but waste water flushing? Do you have hand sanitizer or wipes

on hand to reduce water consumption? Do you have an emergency toilet or can you make one out of a bucket?

- **Water Conservation:** What items do you have that can help you reduce water use? Do you need to add more paper and plastic goods? How can you clean yourself and your children using less water?

Day 3: OH BABY – Meal Prep

A NEW BABY IS COMING! You (or a friend/loved one) are about to have a baby. Prepare a week's worth of freezer meals or meals-in-a-jar that your family can make quickly and easily while you are resting up and soaking in that time with your newborn. While dinners are the main ones to think about, also consider what the family can eat for breakfast and lunch without having to go to the store.

PRACTICE:

- **Make a meal plan for all three meals for seven days.**
- **Put together or plan for 7 breakfasts for your family (this can be some make-ahead muffins or breakfast burritos, smoothie packs, or oatmeal-in-a-jar)**
- **Put together or plan for 7 lunches for your family (single serving jar meals, cup-a-noodles, easy mac, homemade uncrustables, etc.)**
- **Prepare 7 freezer meals or meals-in-a-jar for dinners for your family**
- **Inventory your non-food household items and make sure you have enough on hand to get you through the week and maybe even the next few months**
- **ADVANCED TASK: Plan ahead in case there are complications for you or the baby. Do a three-month meal plan and inventory your ingredients. Make a shopping list to fill in any gaps.**

EVALUATE:

Inventory your resources for having a three-month supply. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- **3 Month Food Supply:** Do you consider freezer foods towards this supply? Do you have recipes you are basing it off of or just have a lot of ingredients stored? Do you have a complete inventory of what you have and what you still need to buy?
- **Non-Food Items:** Do you have extra toiletries on hand? What about toilet paper and paper towels? Cleaning supplies? First aid items? How long could you go without going to a store for basic supplies aside from food.
- **Meals-in-a-Jar:** Do you store freeze-dried or dehydrated foods that can easily be put together as complete meals in jars? Do you know how to convert recipes to be able to do this? Do you have access to recipe ideas for jar meals? Is this something you even want to have as part of your food storage plans?

Day 4: BUG OUT (OR IN) – Time to Rotate

IT'S TIME TO ROTATE YOUR 72 HOUR KIT FOODS! While this isn't necessarily an EMERGENCY it's definitely something that comes up every year or so. Today you need to rotate through some of your 72-hour kit foods and make sure you have the ability to cook them. This is a good chance to make sure that small children (and picky grown-ups) will actually EAT the foods you are storing.

PRACTICE:

Today you will **ONLY** be eating and drinking items from your 72-hour kits.

- You must cook your meals using only the tools you have in your kits.
- Inventory the non-food items in your disaster kit. Look for any expired medications and swap them out. Check sizing of clothing for children and swap for larger ones if necessary. Adjust any age-specific items as necessary (diapers, etc.)
- Review your evacuation list and make sure that your 72-hour kits are at the top of the list of things to grab and go in an emergency.
- **ADVANCED TASK:** For an extra challenge, pretend you had to evacuate and actually spend the day away from home **AND** eat and entertain yourselves using only items in your disaster kits.

EVALUATE:

Inventory your resources in your disaster kits. Here are a few questions to ask yourself :

- **72 Hour Kit Food:** How many calories per day do your kits contain? Is that enough to fuel you if you are expending a lot of energy? What is the shelf life of the foods in your kit? How will you cook the items? Will your kids eat the items you have in your kits? Do you have water stored? Do you have a way to purify more water?
- **Disaster Kits:** Are any first aid supplies in your kit expired? Do you have clothes that need to be rotated out? What are your light sources? Heat sources? What do you have for hygiene supplies? Do you need to restock any of it?

Day 5: GREEN THUMB – Early Frost

FROST IS COMING SOONER THAN EXPECTED! Your garden has been producing a good bounty this growing season but now winter is coming early. Harvest as much food as you can and choose a method of preservation to store it for the winter. If you don't have a garden you can purchase food from a farmer's market, or practice preserving something you already have on hand. The idea is to inventory your preservation supplies and practice doing it!

PRACTICE:

- Harvest enough food from your garden to be able to preserve something (if you don't have a garden you can buy some produce from a stand or farmer's market for this challenge).
- Choose a favorite method of preservation (canning, dehydrating, freeze-drying, freezing)
- Preserve some of your garden harvest. You can do as much or as little as you want. The idea is to PRACTICE whether or not you are a big-time canner or not.
- Inventory your supplies for preserving food, how much would you be able to do in an emergency situation? See "evaluate" section below for more on this.
- **ADVANCED TASK:** Choose a second method of preservation and practice that as well today!

EVALUATE:

Inventory your resources available for food preservation. Here are a few questions to ask yourself :

- **Canning:** Do you have a water bath canner? Do you have a pressure canner? How many spare lids do you have? How many jars do you have on hand? Do you have options for canning without electricity in an emergency situation? Do you have any guides for canning on hand?
- **Dehydrating:** Do you have a dehydrator? Do you have guides for dehydration? If you don't have a dehydrator do you know how to dehydrate in your oven? Or sun oven? Do you have supplies to store the dehydrated foods in, i.e. mylar bags, mason jars, etc.?
- **Freeze-Drying:** Do you have a home freeze-dryer? Is that something on your wish list? Do you understand how to use it and have good results? Do you have supplies to store the freeze-dried foods in?

Day 6: AMNESIA – Car Accident

YOU WERE INVOLVED IN A CAR ACCIDENT AND LOST YOUR MEMORY! Today's tasks will focus on making sure your family has the information it needs to function should something happen to you. Can they pay the bills? Do they know where important documents are? Do you have a shared family calendar? You are still very injured and can't do your normal daily tasks today.

PRACTICE:

Today I am assigning you to NOT do whatever household "jobs" you would normally be responsible for in your home because you are injured. The idea is for your family to experience life WITHOUT you today.

- Think of whoever would take over your family's financial responsibilities should something happen to you (typically a spouse, but maybe a parent or an adult child

of you don't have a partner). Have that person complete the next few tasks. If you are married, you should each do this for each other.

- **Have your partner list all of the bills you normally pay. What account do they come out of? What are the due dates? Do you have access to them online? Is your name on the account with them? – repeat this with your partner's bills too**
- **Do you have a living will? Does it outline who can make financial and medical decisions for you? Can someone write checks for you if you remain medically unstable? Work on creating starting this process today if you haven't already done it (learn more about wills here)**
- **Does your partner know where to find your schedule? Are all the kids activities in there? Do they know the addresses of all of their events? If the calendar is on your phone, does anyone else have access to it? Create some sort of joint calendar today so you can all be on the same page.**
- **What are some other household jobs that you typically take care of? If your partner doesn't know how to do them, teach them how today! (change furnace filters, mow the grass, etc.) – repeat this for your partner's jobs too**
- **ADVANCED TASK: After trying to write this all down for each other, you should both go back and create a master list of ALL your family's bills/payments/etc. This should fill in the cracks for any you missed for each other**

EVALUATE:

Inventory your plans for what would happen if you died or become severely injured/mentally incompetent. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- **Estate Planning: Do you have a will and a living will? Does someone else know about it? Does it outline what will happen with your children as well as your assets?**
- **Important Documents: Does your family know where to find important documents like insurance paperwork, birth certificates, car titles, etc.**
- **How-To: Think about household tasks that you or your partner pretty much do exclusively. Even if you don't start sharing the load, you should at least both know HOW to do them. For example, we have a furnace in our attic, my husband is always the one who goes up and changes the filter. I have never been up there and don't actually know where it is up there or what filters to buy or anything. I do our family's taxes including paying quarterly taxes for our businesses. It's easy for me and I like doing it, but he NEEDS to know how to do it just in case. We will be addressing these and a few other jobs today.**

Day 7: LET'S CELEBRATE – Lottery Winner

YOU WON THE LOTTERY, WOO-HOO! Today you will be inventorying your long term food storage so that you can see what you are missing. Then you will use the lottery money to purchase or replenish anything you are short on. Once you have finished your inventory, make a dessert using only pantry items to celebrate both winning the lottery AND finishing the 7 day challenge!!!

PRACTICE:

Today you must do an inventory of your entire long term food storage. Determine how many people you are storing for and calculate how much you will need for a year supply ... or however long you want to prepare for.

- **Inventory non-food items in your storage. This will be all your toiletries, paper products, etc.**
- **CELEBRATE winning the lottery and finishing the 7 day challenge by making a “food storage cake” today. That means only using pantry items so no milk, flour, eggs, etc. Can you do it?**

EVALUATE:

Inventory your entire storage today. This does NOT just include food! Here are a few questions to ask yourself :

- **LONG TERM FOOD STORAGE:** Do you have the right ingredients to make actual recipes out of your foods? How long do you want to store food for? How many people are you storing for? Do you have a system for rotation and keeping track of shelf life?
- **NON-FOOD ITEMS:** Do you know how much is a year supply for your family for items like toilet paper, toothpaste, etc.? Here's a little track. Write down the date you open a new package of something and see how long it takes before it runs out. If it takes 1 month for the toothpaste to run out, you know you would need to store 12 of them.
- **POWERLESS COOKING:** It doesn't do you any good to store food if you don't have a way to cook it. Evaluate your options for cooking without power. Can you cook inside? Only outside? Do you have enough fuel to cook meals for a year?