



Prepare your survival kit with focus on dietary needs

You likely heard about the predicted five to eight tropical cyclones expected to affect the Central Pacific region this year from June through November. This is almost double the annual average. So if you still haven't prepared a natural disaster survival kit, now is a good time.

Of course, food and water are major parts of your kit. Keep in mind that under disaster conditions concentrated sources of calories are needed. It won't be a time to eat low-carb, low-fat or anything else low. Exceptions may be required for some medical conditions.

Question: What are the most important principles related to choosing foods for a survival kit?

Answer: There are seven basic principles:

- 1) Meets critical water needs.
- 2) Meets at least minimum calorie needs.
- 3) Meets most essential nutrient needs.
- 4) Requires minimal cooking or meal preparation.
- 5) Considers limited space and weight.
- 6) Packaged in nonbreakable waterproof containers.
- 7) Considers medical or allergy

conditions and medication needs.

Q: What are examples of specific foods that help to meet these principles?

A: Water is the most critical nutrient, even though it provides no calories. Mild dehydration can occur within just a few hours and make it difficult to think clearly and make good decisions. The standard recommendation is a gallon of water per person per day for seven days to provide water for drinking, food preparation and sanitation. However, hot weather and physical activity can substantially increase water needs.

Additional water sources include a wide variety of beverages and the water in some foods. Canned and boxed fruit and vegetable juices provide important electrolytes such as sodium and potassium, along with water and needed calories. Canned and boxed milk and soy milk do not need refrigeration and provide protein and other key nutrients along with water. Both protein and salt help the body hold onto water longer, rather than passing it out quickly in the urine.

For regular coffee or tea drinkers, canned coffee and tea products can provide caffeine to prevent headaches associated with caffeine

withdrawal. Caffeine pills are another option.

Limits on space and weight make it important to choose foods rich in both nutrients and calories. For example, granola provides more calories per cup than puffed wheat. Crackers are better than bread. Trail mix with nuts and dried fruit is calorie-packed and needs no preparation. Protein energy bars can double as both concentrated calories and protein sources. Many survival foods are dry and need to be consumed with fluids.

Other high-protein foods that can work well include jerky, dried fish, canned meats and fish, and canned beans. Because canned vegetables are generally low in calories, canned beans can be a better option, providing more carbohydrate, fat and protein and, as a bonus, plenty of fiber to keep everyone regular. Most canned foods need to be consumed shortly after opening. So buy can sizes that you can finish at a single meal.

Short-term survival is unlikely to require dietary supplements. But those who take vitamin and mineral supplements may want to include them in their kits.

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