

Emergency Preparedness

By Rachel Maier, MS



HOPE FOR the best; plan for the worst. Those who fail to plan, plan to fail. Expect the unexpected. This list of clichés could go on and on. When it comes to emergencies, I bet you know you should be prepared, but are you?

A few years ago, my father-in-law came to my house to check on me and the kids while my husband was out of town. A severe thunderstorm was brewing and he wanted to make sure I was ready for it. “Do you have a flashlight with new batteries?” I did. “And a hand-crank radio?” Had that too. I signed up for the county emergency notification system, designated a safe room in the basement and remembered to stock it with flashlights and bottled water. “What about an old mattress?” he asked. I shook my head, clearly confused. “It’s helpful to have one in your safe room to hide behind during a tornado,” he explained, realizing this California girl had no idea what he was talking about. (Turns out, an old mattress makes a good buffer between people and falling debris.)

The wind howled, rain poured and trees lost branches, but we didn’t have to use that old mattress to hide from falling debris. I quickly realized, though, that

while I was prepared to take shelter from a tornado, I wasn’t really prepared to deal with the aftermath of one — or any real emergency, for that matter.

Are You Ready?

What about you? Are you ready to deal with emergencies? If you’re like me, the answer is probably no.

The way I see it, there are three major roadblocks to emergency preparedness: inconvenience, expense and expectation. It takes a lot of time and money, and if we’re being honest, it doesn’t feel like disaster will strike *us*. Is it really worth the trouble? In short: *yes, it’s worth it*. Let’s not forget: Disasters can strike anywhere, anytime and often without much warning. Those who have the best shot at surviving them are the ones who prepare in advance.

Emergency preparedness starts with providing for basic needs — food, water, shelter — but it also extends to things like knowing what to do during an emergency and after it is over. You’ve got to think about storing things such as a wrench to turn off utilities, a fire extinguisher to put out fires and even a can opener to open canned foods. It also involves securing access to vital health records in advance; considering methods for communicating health history to emergency medical personnel; preserving important legal documents such as birth certificates, social security numbers, mortgage information or a copy of a family trust.

I’m still working on my emergency preparedness — there’s just so much to do! — but little by little, I’m getting our family well-positioned to handle whatever emergency may come our

way. Today is a good day for you to get started, too.


5 Tips for Getting Started

1) *Start small, but start somewhere.* Pick one thing you can reasonably accomplish, then do it. For example, print a checklist of items to include in your emergency kit, replace batteries in your flashlights or buy a fire extinguisher and learn how to use it.

2) *Make a list.* Use a free printable checklist (www.ready.gov/kit) so you know what you need to gather or purchase.

3) *Use what you have.* Use your kids’ old backpacks to create their own personal “go” bag with a change of clothes, extra shoes and any other personal items they may need. Collect sample-size toothpastes and toothbrushes from dental visits or shampoos, conditioners and soaps from hotel stays, and use them to build personal hygiene kits.

4) *Collect items over time.* Pick up one thing to add to your kit every time you go shopping: bottles of water, a box of granola bars, a book of matches, a pack of batteries, etc. Little by little, your stash will grow.

5) *Shop sales.* Emergency prep sites like mypatriotssupply.com and beprepared.com often run specials, and garage sales, OfferUp and Facebook Marketplace are great places to find deals on pre-owned equipment. 



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Jase Medical

The Jase Base Case gives you peace of mind with five emergency antibiotics (amoxicillin, azithromycin,

ciprofloxacin, doxycycline and metronidazole) and the option to add on popular medications such as albuterol, epinephrine, ivermectin, ibuprophen, acetaminophen, celecoxib and more. Or, with Jase Daily, you can get up to a 12-month backup supply of your current daily prescription medications for high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, thyroid disease or other chronic health conditions. Jase Medical uses licensed pharmacies, so you can have peace of mind that your medications are safe.

Starts at \$269.95; jasemedical.com

Be Smart Get Prepared First Aid Kit

Manufactured by the number one leading manufacturer of first aid kits in the U.S., the Be Smart Get Prepared 201 piece first aid kit meets the U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulatory standards as a medical device. The case is compact, durable, waterproof and adjustable, making it easy to grab and go when needed. It includes gloves, scissors, bandages, alcohol wipes, instant cold pack, pain relievers, emergency bright stick, whistle and much more.

\$20 for a 201 piece kit; www.amazon.com/Be-Smart-Get-Prepared-First/dp/B001GRS13C?ref_=ast_sto_dp



Shopping Guide for Emergency Preparedness



Medical ID USB Drives

Universal Medical Data provides medical ID USB drives to hold 2 GB worth of your medical information, no matter where you are. You can wear this device in the form of a medical USB bracelet or purchase engraved dog tags that are equipped to store flash drives securely. The USB medical ID wearable products are waterproof and biohazard safe, so you will never have to worry about your data becoming unreadable or unusable. A medical ID USB drive is also an excellent tool for doctors, as they can download your full medical history.

Starts at \$29.95; www.universalmedicaldata.com/product-category/usb-products

GE 4-in-1 Emergency Light

This 4-in-1 emergency LED light includes a light-sensing night light, power failure light, task light and emergency flashlight all in one. It provides 40 lumens of soft white light when used as a portable emergency flashlight and 5 lumens when used as night light/table top light. The built-in light sensor automatically turns the LED night light on at dusk and off at dawn and comes on instantly when power goes off. There is a manual Hi/Low/Off switch to easily switch between lighting.

\$9; www.amazon.com/GE-37373-Foldable-Emergency-Flashlight/dp/B077Y4STKD



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The IronClad keeps your important papers safeguarded in this durable and reliable fireproof document holder. Withstanding temperatures up to 2,000 Fahrenheit, this document organizer is fireproof and water-resistant, providing unmatched security and peace of mind for your most important papers.

\$34.99; shop.ironcladfamily.com/products/fireproof-waterproof-important-documents-organizer

GRAB + GO BOX

This disaster preparedness kit includes a simple, step-by-step guidebook that takes you through the process of preparation and recovery in a disaster; action plans for teaching your family how to stay safe adapting, evacuating and being well during and after any disaster; a pocket-sized disaster deck of color-coded instructional cards that include steps to take for any natural disaster; and supplies such as a cash bag, wristbands, emergency stickers, emergency contact cards, wax pencil, bin labels and much more.

