

## Food

Food provides the fuel and nutrients you need to survive. Food is needed for energy, to repair and build cells, and to prevent sickness.

The human body can survive longer without food than it can without water, so make sure you have enough water stored first. Then focus on food.

### How Much Food Do I Need?

The amount of food you'll store for a disaster will vary based on your age, gender, and health and the number of people in your household.

A good estimate is to have at least 3,000 calories available per day per adult for at least two weeks. Some individuals can get by on fewer calories and some will need more. During times of stress and extreme physical/mental labor, caloric intake might be much higher. If you have extra food, you can always share with your neighbors.

### Your Food Plan

Your emergency food plan should include what to take in your "go-bag" in case you have to evacuate and also what you want to store in your home when you are sheltering-in-place.

Start with foods you already eat. You don't have to purchase your emergency supplies all at once. Each week add a few items to your shopping list.

Don't forget your pets! Make sure you have extra pet food on hand as well.



## Are You Prepared?

When disaster strikes, your government will focus on public safety, helping the extremely vulnerable, and getting critical services back in operation.

Depending on the emergency, you may need to be self-sufficient for several weeks.

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to be prepared. That's why we've designed this "Basic Preparedness" series. While the information provided here does not cover every situation, it should provide enough information so you can take that first step.

More information can be found on our website at [www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff](http://www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff).

*Para su conveniencia el sitio web de la Oficina del Sheriff del Condado de Benton se puede traducir a otros idiomas. Para elegir su idioma preferido haga "clic" en el menú "select languages" al fondo de la página.*



### Sign Up for Emergency Alert

We encourage you to sign up for the Linn-Benton Emergency Alert system.

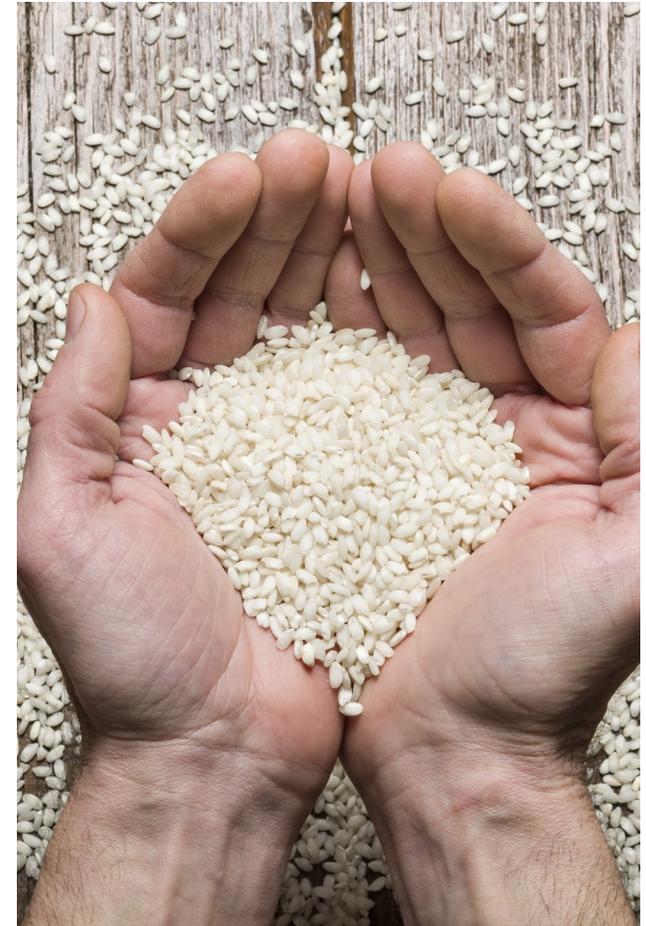
This lets us notify you quickly of emergency or safety events. This system is only used for testing and in emergencies. To sign up, go to the Sheriff's Office webpage and click on the "Emergency Alert" button. If you don't have internet or need help signing up, call us at 541-766-6864.

**Benton County Sheriff's Office**  
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# FOOD



## BASIC PREPAREDNESS

A series on the simple steps you can take to prepare for an emergency



**Benton County Sheriff's Office**  
Emergency Services Division

## Types of Food

**Fresh Food.** Fresh foods are full of good nutrients but have a very short shelf life. During a disaster, eat up any fresh food you have on hand first.

**Ready-To-Eat.** Foods such as trail mix, nuts, peanut butter, protein bars, etc. are easy to grab-and-go but also have a poor shelf life and must be rotated regularly.

**Canned Foods.** Canned meats, fish, vegetables and fruits store well and usually keep for up to a year or more. You can eat them right out of the can. You can buy them in smaller quantities, but they are too heavy for “go-bags” and must be rotated regularly.

**Dry Foods.** Rice, beans, pasta, quinoa, rolled oats, soup mixes and other dry foods have a long shelf life when stored in air-tight containers. They are relatively inexpensive but must be cooked and they need added water.

**Freeze-Dried Foods.** These foods are lightweight and have a long shelf life, but they are expensive and require cooking.

**MREs.** These MREs or “Meals Ready-to-Eat” require no cooking and have a very long shelf life but they are expensive.

**Spices and Favorite Foods.** Tasteless foods can make a disaster feel even worse, so don’t forget to include spices such as salt, pepper, sauce packets, and favorite foods like coffee and sugar, chewing gum or hard candy.

## Where Can I Get These Items?

Most of the food mentioned here can be purchased at your local grocery store. Local sporting goods stores often carry freeze dried foods and MRE’s. Several companies now specialize in providing long-term food storage, although these options are more expensive. They can be found on the internet by searching for “emergency food supplies.”

## A Simple Option—Lentils & Rice

A budget-friendly, simple way to prepare for an emergency is to store two of the cheapest, most complete foods available: lentils and rice. When eaten together, they are a complete protein.

Individuals will need at least 1/2 pounds of lentils and 1/2 pounds of rice per day. Two 5-gallon buckets stored with lentils and rice would feed a household of two for about 42 days.

**Storage.** To get started with this option, purchase two food-grade 5-gallon buckets with gamma seal lids. Gamma seal lids come in two parts, an adapter ring for the bucket and the lid that screws into the ring. They are airtight and allow you to easily open and re-seal the bucket. Available on-line, plan to spend about \$30 per bucket.

**Lentils.** Lentils are a legume. They cook much faster than beans and normally don’t require soaking. They come in three main varieties: brown, green, and red. Any variety can be stored for your emergency supplies. A 5-gallon bucket holds about 44 pounds of lentils at an average cost of \$40. To cook lentils use a lentil-to-water ratio of 1:3. Be sure to use a large enough saucepan as the lentils will double or triple in size. Bring to a boil, cover tightly, reduce heat and simmer until tender. Cook time is typically 15–20 minutes.

**Rice.** Rice comes in many varieties, however white rice is the only form that is viable for long-term storage. About 42 pounds of white rice will fill your 5-gallon bucket at a cost of around \$20. To cook rice, use a rice-to-water ratio of 1:2. Bring your water to a boil, stir in the rice and return to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook for about 15–20 minutes.



## How do I cook food?

It’s recommended that you box up a few basic food preparation tools and utensils and store them with your emergency food supplies.

Don’t forget a can opener!

Many methods for cooking your food are for **OUTSIDE** use only. You don’t want to asphyxiate yourself from cooking fuel fumes or burn your house down while trying to make a hot meal!

An internet search on “emergency cooking” will identify a variety of methods you can use to cook your food.



Whichever cooking option you choose, practice with it. Make sure you know how to use it safely and effectively before that emergency happens.

## Storing Food

When storing your food, focus on keeping it safe.

- ◆ Make sure the food you store is protected from rats and vermin.
- ◆ Vacuum seal foods when possible and use food-grade storage containers.
- ◆ Protect your food stores from excess moisture and temperature extremes.
- ◆ Monitor your supplies. Rotate your food and throw out any food that is expired or damaged.

*This brochure is not intended to provide everything you will need to know about choosing and storing food. But we hope it has given you some ideas and simple steps to get you started. Don’t be paralyzed by looking for the “perfect” solution. Just take that first step and refine as you go!*