

# ARE YOU READY?

## How to prepare an emergency “go-bag”

Having an emergency stockpile is important for when you are stuck at home during a disaster, especially if you are without fresh food, clean water and electricity. But what happens when you need to evacuate?



Make sure each family member has a pre-packed “go-bag,” which is an emergency bag that you grab when you are ordered to evacuate. You can use a small piece of luggage, duffel bag or backpack that is easy to transport. Practice carrying your go-bag to make sure it’s not too heavy — there’s a lot of stuff to put in there.

Your go-bag should include items like food, water, prescriptions and extra clothing to get you through the first couple of days. Pack lightly, and keep one at home, work, school and your car, just to be extra safe. Different items should be in your go-bag depending on where you keep it. For instance, you should pack jumper cables, flares or reflective triangles, an ice scraper and car cellphone charger in your car go-bag and pack an extra pair of comfortable walking shoes in your work go-bag.


## Keep your supplies updated

It’s easy to forget about a go-bag that’s been stored away, especially if you haven’t used it yet. When it’s time to change your clocks because of daylight saving time, use it as a reminder to check your go-bag to make sure it isn’t missing any items and that the food in it hasn’t expired.

Make sure your bag is properly labeled with your name and address and keep it in an easy-to-reach spot, like the bottom of a coat closet in your home or under your bed. A cool, dark place — away from areas in your home that are at risk for flooding — is ideal.



## Here are some other items to include in your go-bag:

- Flashlight
- Paper maps
- Battery-operated radio
- Batteries 
- Emergency cash
- Important documents such as copies of health insurance and identification cards
- List of emergency phone numbers
- Extra prescription eyeglasses, hearing aid or other vital personal items
- Prescription medications and first-aid supplies
- Extra keys to your house and vehicle

## Consider your family's needs while packing your go-bag. There may be some special-needs items for pregnant women and families with infants. These items may include:

- Maternity and baby clothes
- Prenatal vitamins and other medications
- Extra bottled water
- Thermometer
- Copies of vaccination records
- Antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer
- Baby food in pouches or jars and disposable feeding spoons
- Diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Medications and infant pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen
- Emergency birth supplies, such as clean towels, sharp scissors, infant bulb syringe, medical gloves, two white shoelaces, sheets and sanitary pads
- Ready-to-feed formula in single serving cans or bottles, if medically necessary

## Don't forget about pets! Here are some items you should include in their go-bag:

- Food, water and medicine for at least one week
- Leashes and pet carriers
- Non-spill bowls, manual can opener and plastic lid
- Plastic bags, litter box and litter
- Names and phone numbers of your emergency contact, emergency veterinary hospitals and animal shelters



### Image credits

Go bag: Photo by photka, courtesy iStockphoto