

## Food Storage and Rotation

An essential part of being prepared for an emergency is to assemble and properly store food and water. As previously discussed in these articles, you can spread the expense of gathering food and emergency supplies over several weeks. A chart of suggested items to purchase each week for 24-weeks can be downloaded from the Woodinville Website ([www.ci.woodinville.wa.us/Live/DisasterPreparedness.asp](http://www.ci.woodinville.wa.us/Live/DisasterPreparedness.asp)). Gather your family together to make a list of what you will eat in the event of an emergency and each time you go to the store, plan on buying at least one to five items from your food list. Don't forget pets' needs and personal needs items. After you have all the necessities, get some fun foods, too. Once you have enough food and water for three days for the whole family, you can expand your storeroom to cover your needs for longer periods of time.

Proper storage and rotation of your essentials will help eliminate waste and limit the cost of being prepared. First, find an easy to access place in the house or garage with a fairly consistent temperature, as you do not want the food to get too hot or freeze. Store grains and other staples such as flour, corn meal and oats for long-term storage, wrapped in plastic, in watertight containers. Boxed goods should be placed in plastic and put in airtight containers. You should have at least one gallon of water for each family member and dog or cat per day. Store water in plastic containers such as 2-liter soft drink bottles. Larger containers designed specifically for water storage are available at local Army-Navy supply stores.

Try to purchase food items with expiration dates that are seven to eleven months in the future. Make a list of all your items with the expiration dates. Then, every six months (mark your calendar!!!) remove the items from your emergency supplies that will expire within the next six months and rotate them into your home's pantry. Discard all expired items and canned foods in which the can has bulged or rusted. Water should be replaced annually. Swap commercially bottled water with new bottles. We will discuss proper sanitation and treatment of other water storage containers in a future article.