

A little preventative maintenance can go along way in terms of food storage. Understanding the different methods for storing your food supply for short or long term storage will help you get the most out of your food investment.

#### **Consider buying.....**

- Mylar Bags (in different sizes)
- Oxygen Absorbers
- Desiccants
- Plastic Food Storage Containers
- Food Vacuum Sealer with plastic liners
- Heat Clamp or Iron

#### **Things to do.....**

1. Find a safe, dry area in the home to store your longer-term food supplies. It is best not to use a garage or attic as a food storage area due to the drastic temperature fluctuations that occur in these areas of the home.
2. Make a list of long-term foods you are in need of. Those that have family members with special dietary needs should do further research on which types of foods they will need.
3. Practice using your food storage tools on short-term foods to ensure that you understand how the tools work.

This material abbreviated from [www.readynutrition.com](http://www.readynutrition.com)

## **Preparedness #3**

### **Food Storage Tools for Dry Foods**

Recovery from some emergencies doesn't happen overnight. Earthquakes, hurricanes, and ice storms are examples of disasters that are often wide-spread and where relief may take days or weeks to get to people who are affected. If one of these events should happen to you, you will find that basic needs such as food and water become your highest priority; they are your 'life' insurance. In order to understand the importance of having a long-term food supply, you need to begin seeing food as a necessary investment in your family's well being.

Dry foods such as grains, rice, beans, oats, wheat, corn kernels, powdered milk, sugar, salt, baking powder, etc. are the best types of foods to store for the long term. Many of these will retain their food value 30 years or more. Usually, foods that are purchased at a grocery store are packaged for short-term use. Therefore, if you buy foods packaged for short-term storage and wish to have them become part of your long-term food supply, they will need to be re-packaged. Foods which are canned, frozen, or fresh will have a limited storage life and cannot be repackaged. For dry foods, there are numerous techniques used for packaging or re-packaging.

**Multi-barrier system** - Many people choose a multi-barrier approach to store their food....that is, storing one or more containers of food inside another larger container. This system will keep natural elements such as sunlight, moisture and air out of the container when sealed.

**Vacuum sealing** can be used to store food for the short-term. Vacuum sealed bags can be sealed inside Mylar bags for extra protection. Vacuum sealing units can be purchased at most department stores.

**Mylar bags**- Some people only use Mylar bags to store their foodstuffs. If using only Mylar bags be careful to select the heavier bags with greater wall thickness. Mylar bags can be

sealed with a common clothes iron, although this does not eliminate oxygen from inside the container unless oxygen absorbers are also used. Mylar bags and oxygen absorbers are available over the Internet at reasonable prices.

**Food Storage Containers** - Any large quantities of food that you plan to store indefinitely should be stored in food grade containers. These containers will not transfer any non-food chemicals into the food, nor are there any chemicals within the container that are hazardous to humans. Typically a food grade container has a #2 by the recycle symbol or the acronym "HDPE" stamp on the bottom (HDPE stands for "high density polyethylene"). Before any food is to be stored, clean the containers with soapy water, rinse and dry thoroughly. Five-gallon plastic containers are the most popular amongst those who store bulk quantities of food. Also, ensure that you have an air tight lid.

**Mylar Food Liners** - Research has shown that over time, slow amounts of oxygen seep through the walls of plastic containers. Consequently, natural elements, and even insects can find a way inside the container. To add additional protection, adding a liner to the inside of the container, such as Mylar bags will ensure that there are multiple barriers for the food. These food liners come in an assortment of sizes.

**Food Sealers** - Food vacuum sealers remove and lock out air and moisture using specially-designed bags and canisters. This ensures that the longevity of the food is preserved for as long as possible. Using food sealers is a great way to ensure that oxygen is removed from food sources before it is placed in a long-term environment.

**Oxygen Absorbers** - Using oxygen absorbers greatly prolongs the shelf life of stored food. Because it absorbs the oxygen from the container, it inhibits the growth of aerobic pathogens and molds. Oxygen absorbers begin working the moment they are exposed to oxygen. Therefore, it is best to work as efficiently as possible. Oxygen absorbers come in different sizes, so pay attention to the size needed for the container. Oxygen absorbers are not edible, not toxic and do not effect the

smell and taste of the stored product.

**Desiccant Packets** - Desiccant packets moderate the moisture level when placed in a food container. Please note that desiccant is not edible. If the packet somehow breaks open and spills onto the stored food, the entire contents of the container must be thrown away. There are certain food items that desiccant should not be added to, specifically: flour, sugar and salt. These items need a certain amount of moisture to stay usable, and if desiccant is added to it, they will turn into a hard brick.

**Heat Clamp** - A person can use a heat clamp to seal the Mylar bags, or they can seal their Mylar bags with a simple clothes iron put on the highest setting. The heat clamp is usually around \$85 and is specially made for sealing Mylar bags. If the home iron method is used, ensure that you use a hard surface such as a cutting board or book to iron on and slowly go over the Mylar bag. Note: if using a clothes iron to seal Mylar, this method must be done gently and slowly or the Mylar will be damaged.

### **Where To Purchase These Products?**

The Ready Store- For small scale purchases  
Amazon- For small scale purchases  
Ropak- For large quantity purchases  
Sorbent Systems- For large quantity purchases  
Latter Day Saint Food Storage Warehouses

Call around to different restaurants around your area and see if they have any food grade containers with lids that you can have. Typically, restaurants are happy to give these away as they have no need for these containers after they are used. This could save you a lot of money investing in food grade containers.

Storing food is a continual process of using, rotating and resupplying. If a person invests in a food supply, the stored food should be used and more food purchased to resupply the storage shelf. Think of your food supply as a small store where the foods in the front has the shortest expiration date and the ones in the back have the longest.