

# Q: HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR A

a battery-operated radio  
and extra batteries

an extra pair of eyeglasses

a complete change of clothes  
for each family member  
(Make sure the clothes are  
sturdy and can get dirty.)

a fully charged cell phone

a three-day supply of water  
(See the formula in  
“H2O INFO.”)

a three-day supply of  
food for your family that  
does not need to be  
refrigerated or cooked  
(Think canned and include  
a manual can opener.)



\* A full list of emergency kit items for the entire family can be found at [fema.gov](http://fema.gov) and purchased at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org).  
The USAA Education Foundation has a booklet about disaster readiness. You can find it at its Web site: [usaaedfoundation.org/pdf/524.pdf](http://usaaedfoundation.org/pdf/524.pdf)

# NATURAL DISASTER?

blankets and sleeping bags

liquid bleach  
(Find out why you need  
this in "H2O INFO.")

up-to-date first-aid items  
and personal hygiene items  
for each family member

a flashlight  
and extra batteries

a three-day supply of  
any medications each  
family member takes.  
Ask your doctor or  
pharmacist about how to  
store medications.  
(Tip: Check the expiration  
dates on prescriptions  
and over-the-counter  
medications regularly to  
make sure they'll work  
if you need them.)

**A:** After all the Hurricane Katrina images, it's smart to imagine yourself in the same position. What would you do? It's scary to consider, but it's the best way to be ready, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Planning ahead — way ahead of when a disaster might happen — is the best thing to do to give you and your family peace of mind. Here's how you can get involved.

Spearhead your family's effort to put together a disaster supply kit. Ready-made kits are available from the Red Cross online store at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org). But you can build your own that contains enough supplies to get you and your family through three days, without power or water (the recommended time period, according to FEMA). A few essentials are shown, left.\*

Keep the kit in spare backpacks or duffel bags that you can take with you easily if you have to leave your house. To make sure a kit isn't too heavy for someone to carry, divide the items into different bags. Everyone in your house should contribute to putting the items together, and everyone should know where the kit is stored.

## H<sub>2</sub>O INFO

One of the most important items in an emergency kit is drinking water. Here's where you can take the lead.

1. Figure out exactly how much water your family needs for three days. Use this formula:

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \text{ gallon} \\ \times \text{ the number of people} \\ \text{and pets in your house} \\ \times 3 \\ \hline = \text{ water you will need} \end{array}$$

2. Gather clean, plastic containers with tight-sealing lids. Never use glass bottles or jars or cardboard cartons, which can break or leak.

3. Fill the containers with one of these types of water:

• **Tap water:**

After you fill the containers, treat the water with four drops of liquid bleach per quart. The bleach should be regular Clorox like you'd find in a grocery store, which has 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. *Do not use swimming pool chlorine; powdered, scented, or color-safe bleach; or bleach with soap in it.*

• **Unopened bottled water:**

No need to do anything special with this when you store it.

4. Using a permanent marker, write the following on the water containers:

• The date.

• This note: "If this water sits for more than 1 year or has been exposed to heat or light, treat before drinking. Add 4 drops of Clorox per quart. Shake. Let sit for 30 minutes."