

Emergency Supplies on a Budget

Getting emergency supplies doesn't have to be expensive. There are many ways to get things for free or at a discount.



Start Small. Your kit doesn't need to include duplicates of everything you use on a daily basis. It should include items that are necessary for survival, as well as a few comfort items. Focus on your most urgent needs first - water, warmth, food, and medical supplies.

Start With What You Have. See what you have at home. Some of the things you need may already be part of your normal everyday life. It's just a matter of putting them all in one place so you can get to them easily.

Take Your Time. Don't try to build a kit in one day. Chip away at it, and get items when you can afford to. Use an [Emergency Preparedness Calendar](#) to keep you on track. If you can, set aside a budget for buying at least one item each week or each month. Keep your supply list handy so that you can remember what you need when you find a good sale.

Look for Bargains. Look for coupons. Check out garage sales and estate sales. Visit discount stores. Look for store brands and closeout sales. Some stores offer expired or nearly expired food for a steep discount. [Learn more](#) about which foods are okay to eat after their expiration date and which to avoid.

Focus on Water. If you do only one thing, store water. You don't have to buy expensive containers for water storage. Reuse materials you already have. Plastic soda bottles work well. Don't use anything that has contained dairy (milk). Visit regionalh2o.org for info about water storage and treatment.

Buy Nothing. If you use Facebook, see if your neighborhood has a Buy Nothing Group. The [Buy Nothing Project](#) encourages people to give and receive within their local community. Your neighbors might be getting rid of things that would be useful for your emergency kit. And it's always a good idea to know the people around you!

Talk to Your Neighbors. Get to know your neighbors so you can work together on this project. Maybe you can share supplies. If one of you has a generator and the other has lots of water, make a deal to share and help each other during an emergency.