The 72-Hour Family Emergency Checklist

Everything your household needs for three days without power, water or stores - in one weekend.

YOUR FAMILY'S NUMBERS

Water: 1 gallon per person per day x 3 days = 3 gallons per person. ____ people x 3 = ____ gallons

Food: 3 days of no-cook meals per person. ____ people x 9 meals = ____ meals

Pets: add about 1 quart of water a day for a small dog or cat (more for large dogs).

1. WATER

- ☐ Store 3 gallons per person in sealed, food-grade containers (store-bought bottled water is easiest).
- ☐ Add a backup water filter or purification tablets in case stored water runs out.
- ☐ Know how to shut off your home's main water valve - and where the key/tool is.
- ☐ Label containers with the date you filled them; replace tap-filled water every 6 months.
- ☐ If a storm is forecast: fill bathtubs and large pots for flushing and washing.

2. FOOD

- ☐ 3 days of no-cook food per person: canned meals, peanut butter, crackers, cereal, dried fruit.
- ☐ A manual can opener (keep it with the food).
- ☐ Foods your kids will actually eat, plus comfort snacks.
- ☐ Special diets: formula, allergy-safe foods, medical nutrition.
- ☐ Paper plates, cups, utensils, trash bags and wipes.

3. POWER & LIGHT

- ☐ One flashlight or headlamp per person, plus spare batteries.
- ☐ A rechargeable or battery lantern for the main room (never candles near kids).
- ☐ Charged power banks: about 1 phone recharge per person per day.
- ☐ Car phone charger, and a plan to keep at least half a tank of gas.
- ☐ Optional upgrade: a portable power station or small solar charger.
- ☐ Never run a generator, grill or camp stove indoors or in a garage.

4. COMMUNICATION

- ☐ A battery or hand-crank NOAA weather radio.
- ☐ Written list of family, school, work, doctor and neighbor numbers (phones die).
- ☐ One out-of-area contact everyone checks in with.
- ☐ Two meeting spots: right outside home, and outside your neighborhood.
- ☐ Sign up for local emergency alerts from your city or county.

5. FIRST AID & HEALTH

- [ ] A stocked first-aid kit: bandages, gauze, tape, antiseptic, gloves, tweezers.
- [ ] At least a 7-day supply of prescription medicines, with a written list of doses.
- [ ] Pain/fever reducer for adults and children, allergy medicine, thermometer.
- [ ] Glasses or contacts, hearing aid batteries, and other medical supplies.
- [ ] Hand sanitizer, soap, toilet paper and feminine supplies.

6. CHILDREN & BABIES

- [ ] Diapers, wipes and diaper cream for 3+ days.
- [ ] Formula, bottles and clean water to mix it - or nursing supplies.
- [ ] Child-dose medicines and a copy of each child's medical info.
- [ ] A comfort item, books, cards or a quiet game for each child.
- [ ] A recent photo of each child and a card with your phone number in their bag.
- [ ] Talk through the plan together so kids know what to expect.

7. PETS

- [ ] 3+ days of pet food and water, bowls, and any medicines.
- [ ] Leash, harness, and a carrier or crate for each pet.
- [ ] Vaccination records and a current photo of each pet.
- [ ] Waste bags or litter, and a tag with your phone number.
- [ ] A list of pet-friendly shelters or hotels along your route.

8. EVACUATION GO-BAG

- [ ] One backpack per person by the door: water, snacks, light, change of clothes.
- [ ] Copies of IDs, insurance and medical cards (paper or on a USB drive).
- [ ] Cash in small bills - card readers and ATMs need power.
- [ ] Spare house and car keys, phone charger and a power bank.
- [ ] A paper map with two routes out of your area marked.
- [ ] Sturdy shoes, a rain layer and an emergency blanket.

9. HOME SAFETY - DO THESE ONCE

- [ ] Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms; replace batteries.
- [ ] Learn how to shut off water, gas (only if you smell gas or are told to) and electricity.
- [ ] Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen and know how to use it.
- [ ] Set a calendar reminder to check expiry dates and swap water every 6 months.

Printable Shopping Checklist

Tick what you have, write how many you need, then shop only for the gaps. Start with the top rows.

Item		Need	Have	Buy	Notes
Water - 3 gallons per person	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Water filter or purification tablets	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
No-cook food, 3 days per person	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Manual can opener	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Flashlight or headlamp per person	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Spare batteries	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Power banks (charged)	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Battery / hand-crank weather radio	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
First-aid kit	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
7-day medicine supply	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Go-bag per person	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Cash in small bills	ESSENTIAL		☐	☐	
Rechargeable lantern	HELPFUL		☐	☐	
Baby / child supplies	IF NEEDED		☐	☐	
Pet food, water and carrier	IF NEEDED		☐	☐	
Emergency blankets	HELPFUL		☐	☐	
Portable power station or solar charger	UPGRADE		☐	☐	
Fire extinguisher	HELPFUL		☐	☐	
			☐	☐	
			☐	☐	

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Water, food and kit basics follow Ready.gov "Build a Kit" (ready.gov/kit) and American Red Cross guidance (redcross.org). Generator and carbon monoxide safety follow the CDC (cdc.gov/carbon-monoxide). Weather radio guidance: NOAA (weather.gov/nwr). This checklist is general information, not a guarantee of safety. Always follow instructions from local emergency officials.
Want a personalized list? Take the free 2-minute quiz at rootboundfamily.com/family-readiness-quiz