

## Home Stockpiling of Food and Essential Items

Updated February 8, 2019<sup>1</sup>

Note: Every Save the Children office will have different foods available at local groceries and markets. IPPs should assist staff in adapting this basic list to the available foods in the area. Pre-prepared foods that require no cooking (for example, peanut butter), will provide nutritional value and store well over time. Additionally, staff should consider how to prepare foods that are not ready-to-eat. Burners, stoves, charcoal, wood, etc. should be considered and added to this list, as appropriate to the area. Please send comments, suggestions for improvement, and questions to [kbolles@savechildren.org](mailto:kbolles@savechildren.org).

You and your family can take steps to lessen the impact of a potential severe influenza pandemic by stockpiling food and other essential items. The checklist below will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

Some experts have recommended that individuals and families stockpile essential items for the following reasons:

1. Supply systems will likely not function normally in a severe pandemic and basic items may not be available;
2. A severe pandemic may cause an overflow of people at markets and stores seeking the same items, resulting in stock-outs;
3. In the event of a pandemic wave of severe illness, it will be important to avoid crowds, such as marketplaces; and
4. Some family members may be ill and unable to leave the house to procure these key items.

In March 2006, Save the Children/US suggested that staff and families consider the option to stockpile now, and strongly recommended that all staff stockpile in the event of news of a pandemic alert related to sustained community-level transmission (outside of health facilities) of a novel respiratory virus involving high rates of severe illness and death (anywhere in the world). Experts have recommended that households consider stockpiling a 6-week supply of essential items.<sup>2</sup>

### **Food items**

Since no single food item contains all the nutrients a person needs, it is wise to store items from each food group. Consider the circumstances of family members when deciding which foods to store (e.g., the age, gender, and activity of the individuals in the family). In order for food storage to sustain an individual/family during a pandemic wave, dry foods need to be low in moisture, good quality, and insect free. Keep all food away from heat and moisture. The following products are excellent to store because of their ability to retain flavor and nutritional value:

---

<sup>1</sup> Updated to remove out-of-date WHO phases of pandemic alert.

<sup>2</sup> This language was updated in Feb. 2019. The length of pandemic waves/outbreaks in communities is unpredictable, but these may last as long as 16 weeks (or more?), with several weeks of the most intense transmission (& most cases of illness) towards the middle of these waves.

1. grains (wheat, rice, corn, rolled oats, pasta)
2. legumes (dry beans, peas, lentils)
3. powdered milk
4. sugar or honey
5. cooking oil
6. salt
7. food items specific for children under 2, if applicable
8. water (and/or chlorine to purify water)

### **Non-Food Items**

1. Make sure that you have adequate supplies of any essential prescription medicines that you need.
2. soap and water, or hand-sanitizer
3. medicines for fever or pain
4. thermometer
5. fluids with electrolytes (for example, packets of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS))
6. cleansing materials (alcohol, chlorine)
7. flashlight and/or candles
8. batteries
9. battery-operated radio
10. disposable bags for garbage
11. any materials you need to work from home
12. tissues, toilet paper
13. latex or rubber gloves
14. generator, if available and affordable

(Guidance adapted from Pandemic Influenza Planning: A Guide for Individuals and Families, [www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/guide.pdf](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/guide.pdf); and Provident Living, Food Storage and Emergency Preparedness.)