

Add hurricane menu to your storm prep, experts say

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Satellite view of Isaac in the Caribbean. Photo: NASA Goddard MODIS Rapid Response Team

Stock up on nonperishables, protein sources, powdered milk.

(HealthDay)—As Isaac bears down on the U.S. Gulf Coast, nearby residents should think ahead and look beyond batteries and flashlights when making their hurricane emergency plans, experts say.

Your preparations should include [food](#), safety and finding ways to feed your family if electricity and refrigeration become unavailable, a news release from the [Mayo Clinic](#) in Florida advises.

"Whether it's a hurricane or another natural disaster, it's critical to understand basic food and [water safety](#), particularly if [power outages](#) or flooding occur. Having a plan in place will ensure [proper nutrition](#), energy, and long-term wellness," Sherry Mahoney, director of nutrition

and food services at the clinic, said in the news release.

It's a good idea to create a meal plan in advance, "since most people aren't thinking about recipes (during a disaster), and refrigeration and cooking may become a problem," Mahoney advised.

Eating out of cans doesn't have to be boring, according to Ron Stone, assistant director of nutrition at the clinic.

"There are many options to mix and match from your pantry, and with advanced planning and a little creativity, you can provide healthy and delicious meals for your family," he said in the news release.

Stone offered the following tips for stocking your pantry and planning an emergency menu:

- Know the safe storage temperatures for perishable food. If the power goes out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. If unopened, a refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours, and a freezer will maintain its temperature for about 48 hours if it's full and 24 hours if it's half full.
- Stock up on condiments such as ketchup, mustard, soy sauce and BBQ sauce. They have a long shelf life and are versatile. Make sure your pantry has canned products with protein (such as chicken, salmon, beans and peanut butter) and that you have a manual can opener.
- Keep boxes of [powdered milk](#) or shelf-stable cartons of milk that can be used for cereal or desserts. Dried fruits, nuts and spices are easy to store and can add a dash of flavor to otherwise bland dishes during an emergency.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention has more about [hurricane preparedness and response](#).

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