

# How to stay safe when the power goes out

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(HealthDay)—Sudden power outages can be frustrating, but what if your power is knocked out for a prolonged period? Would you be ready?

The American Red Cross recommends preparing for emergency outages by putting together a kit that contains these essentials:

- Water (each person in the household needs one gallon per day),
- Non-perishable, easy-to-prepare foods,
- Flashlights (avoid candles, which could start a fire),
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio,
- Extra batteries,
- First aid kit,
- A week's supply of medications and required medical items,
- Multi-purpose tool,
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items,
- Copies of personal documents, such as a list of medications and medical information; deed/lease to home; birth certificates; passports; insurance policies,
- Cellphone with chargers,
- Family and emergency contact information,
- Extra cash.

People who are being evacuated should have a three-day supply of these items, according to the Red Cross. Those staying at home should store a two-week supply.

Provide a backup power source if someone in the home is dependent on electric-powered, life-sustaining equipment.

It's also a good idea to keep the gas tank of at least one car full and to have a non-cordless telephone at [home](#). It will probably work during a [power](#) outage.

Perishable food isn't apt to spoil if an outage lasts less than two hours, the Red Cross noted in a news release. For prolonged outages, you should have at least one cooler on hand.

Surrounding food with ice in a cooler or in the refrigerator will keep it colder for a longer time. Use a digital quick-response thermometer to check internal food temperatures and make sure [food](#) is cold enough to use safely.

**More information:** The U.S. Department of Homeland Security provides more [power outage safety and preparation tips](#).

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