

Mayo Clinic minute: Preparing your pantry for severe weather

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As hurricane season ramps up, emergency management officials recommend that residents in coastal communities plan for an active few months. Having the right supplies, creating a meal plan and knowing

when food is no longer safe to consume from a refrigerator or freezer are all important pieces of a safety plan.

Before severe weather strikes, it's important to prepare with enough [food](#) and water to last through [power outages](#).

"You want to have 1 gallon per person per day, and you want to plan for three days," says Hollee Grady, a Mayo Clinic dietitian. "For one person, that'd be 3 gallons of water. Let's say you have a family of five, that'd be 15 gallons."

When it comes to food, living off packaged goods doesn't have to be unappetizing. Reach for proteins like meats, fish, beans or nut butters that can be part of a diet balanced with fruits and vegetables.

"Get creative and make a dessert," says Grady. "You could make peanut butter bites with oatmeal, [peanut butter](#), chocolate chips and honey—mix together and form quarter-sized bites."

If the power goes out, that starts a ticking clock for foods in cold storage. Food spoils at around 48 hours in a fully stocked freezer and much sooner for items in the refrigerator.

"Four hours after the power goes out, you don't want to eat anything that's in the refrigerator that would go bad," says Grady. "Make sure that you throw out those items."

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