

## Storage Mistakes - February 2006

This month we will focus on mistakes made in accumulating in food storage and fuel storage. The following article was found on the internet in several sites, including Walton Feed. I have underlined things that I felt were important to note.

### The Seven Major Mistakes in Food Storage

By Vicki Tate, Author and Lecturer

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*A month or two ago I met a cute little gal who was talking to me about her newly begun food storage. "You know," she began, "I've dreaded doing my storage for years, it seems so blah, but the way national events are going my husband and I decided we couldn't put it off anymore. And do you know, it really hasn't been so hard. We just bought 20 bags of wheat, my husband found a place to get 60 pound cans of honey, and now all we have to do is get a couple of cases of powdered milk. Could you tell me where to get the milk?"*

*After I suggested several distributors, I asked, "Do you know how to cook with your wheat?"*

*"Oh," she laughed, "if we ever need it I'll learn how. My kids only like white bread and I don't have a wheat grinder."*

*She had just made every major mistake in storing food (other than not storing anything at all). But she's not alone, through 14 years of helping people prepare I found most people's storage starts looking just like hers. So what's wrong with this storage plan? There are seven serious problems that may occur trying to live on these basics:*

1. **Variety** – *Most people don't have enough variety in their storage. Ninety-five percent of the people I've worked with have only stored the four basic items we mentioned earlier, wheat, milk, honey, and salt. Statistics show most of us won't survive on such a diet for several reasons.*
  - a. *Many people are allergic to wheat and may not be aware of it until they are eating it meal after meal.*
  - b. *Wheat is too harsh for young children. They can tolerate it in small amounts but not as their main staple.*
  - c. *We get tired of eating the same foods over and over, and many times prefer to not eat than to sample that particular food again. This is called "appetite fatigue." Young children and older people are particularly susceptible to it. Store less wheat than is generally suggested and put the difference into a variety of other grains, particular ones your family likes to eat. Also store a variety of beans. This will add variety of color, texture and flavor. Variety is the key to a successful storage program. It is essential that you store flavorings such as tomato, bullion, cheese, and onion.*

*Also, include a good supply of spices you like to cook with. These flavorings and spices allow you to do many creative things with your grains and beans. Without them you are severely limited. One of the best suggestions I can give you is buy a good food storage cookbook, go through it, and see what your family would really eat. Notice the ingredients as you do it. This will help you more than anything else to know what items to store.*

2. **Extended Staples** – *Few people get beyond storing the four basic items, but it's extremely important that you do so. Never put "all your eggs in one basket." Store dehydrated and/or freeze-dried foods as well as home canned and "store bought" canned goods. Make sure you add cooking oil, shortening, baking powder, soda, yeast and powdered eggs. You can't cook even the most basic recipes without these items. Because of limited space I won't list all the items that should be included in a well-balanced storage program. They are included in "The New Cooking With Home Storage" cookbook, as well as information on how much to store, and where to purchase it.*
3. **Vitamins** – *Vitamins are important, especially if you have children, since children do not store body reserves of nutrients as adults do. A good quality multi-vitamin and Vitamin C are the most vital. Others might be added as your budget permits.*
4. **Quick and Easy and "Psychological Foods"** – *Quick and easy foods help you through times when you are psychologically or physically unable to prepare your basic storage items. "No cook" foods such as freeze-dried are wonderful since they require little preparation. MREs (Meal Ready to Eat), such as many preparedness outlets carry, canned goods, etc., are also very good. "Psychological Foods" are the goodies – Jello, pudding, candy, etc. – you should add to your storage.*

*These may sound frivolous, but through the years I've talked with many people who have lived entirely on their storage for extended periods of time. Nearly all of them say these were the most helpful items in their storage to "normalize" their situations and make it more bearable. These are especially important if you have children.*

5. **Balance** – *Time and time again I've seen families buy all of their wheat, then buy all of another item and so on. Don't do that. It's important to keep well balanced as you build your storage. Buy several items rather than a large quantity of one item. If something happens and you have to live on your present storage, you'll fare much better having a one-month supply of a variety of items than a year's supply of two or three items.*
6. **Containers** – *Always store your bulk foods in food storage containers. I have seen literally tons and tons of food thrown away because they were left in sacks where they became highly susceptible to moisture, insects, and*

rodents. If you are using plastic buckets, make sure they are lined with a food grade plastic liner available from companies that carry packaging supplies. Never use trash can liners as these are treated with pesticides. Don't stack them too high. In an earthquake they may topple, the lids pop open, or they may crack. A better container is the #10 tin can which most preparedness companies use when they package their foods.

7. **Use Your Storage** – In all the years I've worked with preparedness, one of the biggest problems I've seen is people storing food and not knowing what to do with it. It's vital that you and your family become familiar with the things you are storing. You need to know how to prepare these foods. This is not something you want to have to learn under stress. Your family needs to be used to eating these foods. A stressful period is not a good time to totally change your diet. Get a good food storage cookbook and learn to use these foods!

It's easy to solve the food storage problems once you know what they are. The lady I talked about at the beginning of the article left realizing what she had stored was a good beginning but not enough, as she said, "It's better to find out the mistakes I've made now while there's still time to make corrections. This makes more sense."

If you're one who needs to make some adjustments, that is OK. Look at these suggestions and add the things you need. It's easy to take a basic storage and add the essential items to make it livable, but it needs to be done. As I did the research for my cookbook I wanted to include recipes that gave help to families no matter what they stored. As I put the material together it was fascinating for me to learn what the pioneers ate are the type of things we store. If you have stored only the basics, there's very, very little you can do with it. By adding even just a few things it greatly increases your options, and the prospect of your family surviving on it. As I studied how the pioneers lived and ate, my whole feeling for food storage changed. I realized our "storage" is what most of the world has always lived on. If it's put together the right way we will be returning to good basic foods with a few goodies thrown in.

**FUEL** – **How to correctly store fuel is an essential thing to know!** With gas prices going up and the fear of not having enough fuel to heat our homes and cook with during an emergency, many of us are storing fuels in and near our homes. It is imperative that we store them correctly to avoid or at least limit possible problems if an earthquake, fire or disaster occurs in or near our homes. The following information was taken from the Saturday, December 10, 2005 edition of the Standard-Examiner on page E1 of the Life, Home & Family Section. The article is entitled "Don't Be Fuel-ish". If you want the entire article you can go to the Standard-Examiner website.

#### **The Rules of Fuel Storage**

- **"Never, never store any of these products in the basement,** or around any open-flame devices. Most of these fuels vapors are heavier than air, and they go down to the lowest level. The pilot light on the water heater and furnace are low, and you may not smell the vapor before it hits a pilot light," warns Kim Passey with the Utah State Fire Marshal's Office.
- **Control all sources of ignition.** Don't smoke near fuel, don't allow children access to matches or lighters, and don't get car exhaust too close to fuel storage, Passey adds.
- **If you store more than five gallons of flammable liquids, you need at least one 2A10BC rated fire extinguisher nearby** – no closer than 10 feet, but no farther than 50 feet. Ogden fire marshal Matt Schwank believes all homes should have at least two such extinguishers, one in the home and one in the garage.
- **Store fuel at least 30 feet away from your house, and your neighbor's house,** advises Dave Rich, Morgan County's fire chief. That applies to fuels that aren't in a liquid or gas form, such as wood. Schwank says coal and charcoal should be stored in detached structures.
- **Always use fuel heaters as directed, avoiding use of unvented kerosene heaters indoors.** And be sure to install carbon monoxide detectors in addition to smoke detectors. "Carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless. You can't see it or smell it, so you don't know if it's there," said Layton fire marshal Dean Hunt.

Please follow the regulations so that your homes and families are safe and protected. Have an emergency evacuation practice. Practice lighting and using your cooking, heating and lighting equipment. Remember to store medicines too! Use your food storage and get a good food storage cookbook. Experiment with meals. Store what your family needs. Have fun with it!