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Disaster preparedness - Are you ready?

By Ma'at Seba
SUN COLUMNIST



Earthquakes, mudslides, hurricanes, tornadoes, torrential rainstorms, and ice storms are becoming an everyday occurrence nationally in the news. In 2003, there was a power outage that affected several north-

eastern states. The outage in most areas lasted no more than 24 hours and so most people coped fairly well. However, what if the blackout had lasted for four days, a week or three weeks? If you were to experience a disaster today, the question is, Are You Ready? Basic services such as electricity, water, sewage and telephones might not be working. There would be long lines at the gas pumps, grocery and hardware stores, if they are even open. Public transportation such as buses and subways might cease, the planes and trains might be grounded stranding passengers. Police, fire and EMS services would be reduced to top priority life threatening situations only. If your city is faced with an immediate disaster, the question is, Are You Ready?

All over this country and world, people are experiencing disasters caused by floods, tornados, mud slides, earthquakes, hurricanes and volcanic eruptions. When a disaster appears rarely is there enough warning to prepare for it. People are going about their day and then they find themselves faced with an unexpected disastrous situation and without the resources on how to handle it. It is a good idea to prepare your home, car and even your business for an emergency situation by having a basic emergency supply kit and readiness plan of action. Listed are some basic suggestions (www.Ready.gov):

- Water, one gallon of water or more per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dusk mask to help filter contaminated air, electrical tape, plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place or to seal doors and windows in case of airborne contaminations, smoke etc.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities (learn where the shut off valves are located and the proper procedure for disconnections and shutoffs)
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Maps (local, state and national)
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger
- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.

- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper - When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a plastic zip-lock bag or a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene



items

- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children
- Also prepare for infants, seniors or people with special needs such as: formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk, medications, moist towelettes, diaper rash ointment, heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin and other prescription drugs, denture needs, contact lenses and supplies, list of medications including dosages, list of any allergies, extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries, extra wheelchair batteries and oxygen. Keep a list of the style and serial number of medical devices, medical insurance and Medicare cards, doctors, relatives or friends who should be notified if you are hurt. If you have a cell phone, program that person(s) as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your ICE listings in order to get a hold of someone you know. Decide ahead of time what the criteria would be for "Stay or go" if a disaster should happen and what the evacuation options are for leaving your area or city. Consider that family members might be in several locations such as work, school, church, an event etc. and what the plan will be for contacting each other and a pre-planned location of meeting up with each other should communications (phones and cell phones) be inoperable.

Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water, pack a manual can opener and eating utensils, avoid salty foods because they will make you thirsty, choose foods your family will eat such as ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables, protein or fruit bars, dry cereal or granola, peanut butter, dried fruit, nuts, crackers, canned juices, non-perishable pasteurized milk, high energy foods, vitamins, infant foods comfort/stress foods. Also it is important to have items that are multi-purposed such as colloidal silver, hydrogen peroxide 35% food grade (it has internal and external uses) and green foods (which can sustain life if there is no other sources of food such as Moringa - which also purifies turbid water, spirulina, wheatgrass, barley grass and alfalfa).

There are many websites, books and resources with information on emergency survival and preparedness, as well as doing research on the preparedness resources from your city. It would be wise to prepare yourself and your family for emergency situations and not assume that nothing will ever happen in your life that might require you to not be ready.

For additional information, visit Loving Life Health Store at 15224 W. 7 Mile, Detroit, MI. 48235 Mon-Fri. 10-7 pm & Sat. 10 - 6 pm. Call (313)861-1118.

By Melody Thompson
SUN COLUMNIST



This month, we continue the healthy benefits of smoothies by adding the super food, flaxseed.

They're absolutely packed with fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, B vitamins, antioxidants, and cancer-fighting lignans.

Some call it one of the most powerful plant foods on the planet. There's some evidence it may help reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes. That's quite a tall order for a tiny seed that's been around for centuries.

Cancer

Recent studies have suggested that flaxseed may have a protective effect against breast cancer, prostate cancer, and colon cancer. At least two of the components in flaxseed seem to contribute.

The lignans in flaxseed may provide some protection against cancers that are sensitive to hormones without interfering with the breast cancer drug tamoxifen.

Lignans may help protect against cancer by blocking enzymes that are involved in hormone metabolism and interfering with the growth and spread of tumor cells.

Some of the other components in flaxseed also have antioxidant properties, which may contribute to protection against cancer and heart disease.

How much do you need? The health benefits noted in the studies above were observed with just 1 tablespoon (10 grams)

For Veggies Sake

of ground flax seeds per day. However, it's recommended to keep serving sizes to less than 5 tablespoons (50 grams) of flax seeds per day.

Cardiovascular Disease

Research suggests that plant omega-3s help the cardiovascular system through several different mechanisms, including anti-inflammatory action and normalizing the heartbeat.

- Eating flaxseed daily may also help your cholesterol. The level of "bad" cholesterol in the bloodstream has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease, obesity and diabetes. A study of menopausal women showed a decrease in bad cholesterol levels after the women ate 4 tablespoons of ground flaxseed each day for a year.

Banana Almond Flax Smoothie

This smoothie is like dessert for breakfast. Once you try this smoothie, you're going to have to keep an extra stock of frozen bananas on hand at all times. It's definitely a smoothie you'll want to make regularly. It has a deliciously nutty flavor and it's perfectly complimented by the sweet bananas. It's packed with good ingredients.

- almond butter
- bananas
- ground flax seeds
- unsweetened almond milk
- plain Greek yogurt
- honey
- and just a few drops of almond extract

For more information, ideas or questions contact us at forveggiesake@yahoo.com.

Michigan experiencing increase in Legionellosis cases

LANSING, Mich. - The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is coordinating with local health departments across the state to investigate cases of legionellosis this summer. To date in 2019, there have been 140 confirmed cases of legionellosis reported in 38 counties compared to 135 confirmed cases during the same time-frame in 2018.

Confirmed cases include 19 in Oakland County, 16 in Wayne County, 13 in Macomb County, 11 in Genesee County and 10 cases each in the City of Detroit and Kent County.

This increase corresponds with national increases in legionellosis. Legionellosis is most common in the summer and early fall when warming, stagnant waters present the best environment for bacterial growth in water systems.

MDHHS and local health departments are working to inform healthcare providers of the increase in cases and share information regarding testing and treatment. Legionellosis is a respiratory infection caused by Legionella bacteria. Legionnaires' disease is an infection with symptoms that include fever, cough and pneumonia. A milder form of legionellosis, Pontiac fever, is an influenza-like illness without pneumonia that resolves on its own.

"With warmer days now here, we want everyone to be aware of Legionnaire's disease, especially if they may be at higher risk for illness," said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MDHHS chief medical executive and chief deputy director for health. "We also want all healthcare providers to remain vigilant and test and treat appropriately."

Legionella bacteria are found naturally in fresh water lakes and streams but can

also be found in man-made water systems. Potable water systems, cooling towers, whirlpool spas and decorative fountains offer common environments for bacterial growth and transmission if they are not cleaned and maintained properly. Warm

water, stagnation and low disinfectant levels are conditions that support growth in these water systems.

Transmission to people occurs when mist or vapor containing the bacteria is inhaled. Legionellosis does not spread person to person. Risk factors for exposure to Legionella bacteria include:

- Recent travel with an overnight stay.
- Recent stay in a healthcare facility.
- Exposure to hot tubs.
- Exposure to settings where the plumbing has had recent repairs or maintenance work.
- Most healthy individuals do not become infected after exposure to Legionella. Individuals at a higher risk of getting sick include the following:
- People over age 50.
- Current or former smokers.
- People with chronic lung disease.
- People with weakened immune systems from diseases, such as cancer, diabetes or liver or kidney failure.
- People who take immunosuppressant drugs.

Individuals with any concerns about Legionnaires' disease or exposure to the Legionella bacteria should talk to their healthcare provider. MDHHS and local health departments will continue to monitor cases and provide updates to the public. More information on Legionella and Legionnaires' disease can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

