

# Home Heart



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It's hard to be in the RE industry and not be swamped with Y2K information and questions. I personally don't think it will be as bad as some alarmists predict. However, I've found myself giving thought to preparation in the event of some services being interrupted. In the following article, you'll find some cheap and dirty preparations.

## Why 2K?

At the changing of every century there have been dire predictions on the collapse of life as it was known at the time. Now that we are rolling over a millennium, the same is true to a more fevered degree. I really don't know what is going to happen. I have no desire to debate the question with anyone.

## Be Prepared

Y2K or not, it's just good sense to be ready for any disaster—natural or man-made. As anyone who has been in a size large disaster knows, official help does not come right away. Medical and rescue personnel are all busy saving who they can. Here in California, we are told that we need to be able to care for ourselves for at least three days, including food and water, in case of an earthquake.

## Taking Stock

What do you absolutely need to get by? Food, water, and shelter. How many people will there be? How long could you feed your family on what you have stored right now? If the power went out, would you be able to cook and have lights? Do you, or does anyone in your family, take medication regularly? Try to contemplate just your own bare necessities.

## Cheap & Dirty

Buy a *Heaven's Flame* book and build a solar cooker for under \$5. You may think I'm touting this book just because we publish it. I'm not. It is the best book on the subject I have ever read. You can make a couple of solar cookers, and cook with one while you pasteurize water with the other.

A backpackers campstove and some cans of fuel would be a good backup, in case the sun doesn't shine.

Find a discount store and buy Novena Candles for emergency lighting. These are the candles in a tall glass, sometimes with religious pictures on them. A Novena is a Catholic prayer ritual lasting nine days. These candles are made to burn for nine days straight. If you only use them for a few hours after dark, they could last for weeks. The wax doesn't drip because it is contained in the glass. We have a store around here where everything is 98 cents or less. I have a supply of these candles, even though I'm on an RE system and our personal power grid does not black out.

Get a solar shower. You know the kind—they are usually sold for camping. They are cheap, like \$12 or so. In fact, they are so cheap, you should get two. I bought a friend one of those when her shower was broken, and now she won't be without one. You can shower with it, or just heat water.

## Food

I've seen companies selling Y2K food supplies. I think you can do better on your own. Keep an eye out for sales on canned goods. Some grocery stores have an annual canned food case sale. Or, double what you usually buy. Bulk foods like grains and flours are good. Look around for a buying club where you can get better prices.

The best storage method I've found for bulk foods is five or seven gallon buckets. The lids that come with them are horribly hard to get off and on. Now, there is a really hip kind of lid system. First you place the outside ring onto the bucket. Then a locking threaded cover spins on or off easily. Air and water tight, bug proof—it's the best thing I've seen. I've seen them for about \$10 each. It's an investment, but it will last a long time and keep your food clean and safe. A five gallon bucket will hold 25 lbs. of grain or beans.

I read a really good suggestion in a Y2K article. It recommended that you cook a meal using your emergency rations once in a while. This would be good as it would make you think about all of the little things you use to flavor a meal—spices, salt, oil, vinegar, etc. Bulk food is good, but it can be pretty bland by itself.

## Renewables

Get a solar flashlight. Get a solar battery charging setup and some rechargeable batteries. Make sure they are the right size for your flashlight and radio. For bigger systems, keep reading *Home Power*.

## Communications

I've already mentioned a radio for listening. Now, take a no-code test and get a ham radio license. Amateur

radio operators are always informed and ready in any emergency. Join a ham radio emergency net like ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services). Don't just be a part of the problem, get ready to help out.

### Medical Concerns

Get a bee sting kit from your doctor. Know how to use it. If you or any member of your family takes medication regularly, start filling your prescriptions a little earlier each time to build up a supply. Use the meds in order of date, so you use the oldest first.

Get a first aid kit, or make one. Get a good first aid book. If you can find a training manual for EMTs, that would be best. A Merck manual is good for diagnosing and for treatment recommendations. Some health organizations (like HMO's) have a book for members that identifies conditions by symptoms, suggests home treatment, and lets you know when you should seek professional help. A stethoscope and blood pressure cuff are good to have, too. Learn how to use them.

### Gardening

Get open pollinated seeds so you can save them from year to year. Learn to utilize the growing space that you have to it's fullest. Get John Jeavon's book, *How to Grow More Vegetables Than You Ever Thought Possible on Less Land Than You Can Imagine*. I know it's available through his sister, Betsy, at Bountiful Gardens. They sell only open pollinated seeds there—no hybrids.

### Conclusion

This is by no means the last word in preparing yourself for whatever. These are only some things that I have thought of. There are a lot of web sites dedicated to the whole Y2K thing. The site [www.urbansurvival.com](http://www.urbansurvival.com) is a good one. There is a plethora of newsletters, articles and advertisements also. Try not to get too freaked out. Some ads are really made to scare you. My favorite alarmist ad said, "call while there is still a dial tone." Really.

Lastly, remember that toilet paper is like firewood—you can't have too much, because you will use it eventually.

### Access

Kathleen Jarschke-Schultze is playing with her new Airedale puppy, Emma Rushingheart, at her home in Northernmost California, c/o Home Power Magazine, POB 520, Ashland, OR 97520 • 530-475-0830  
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