

Emergency Sanitation for Our Little Loved Ones

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[Approx Reading Time: 6 minutes](#)

Are you ready for an emergency without running water with your little ones? Adults can get by with less water for hygiene purposes, but not so with babies and toddlers. Our youngest friends have unique requirements when it comes to emergency sanitation.

How do you prepare to survive a disaster with your baby or toddler? **You carefully prepare, in advance, to meet their unique needs from diapers to wipes to low-water laundry techniques.** Let me share my words of wisdom as a mom of a lot of little people, including twins.



Babies Require Unique Emergency Sanitation Supplies

Babies definitely fall into the “special needs” category when planning for emergencies. They are dependent upon caregivers for survival.

The young are more at risk for serious illness or death when exposed to severe weather, nuclear radiation, chemical or biological toxins, or inadequate nutrition.

They may require special soaps and supplies to keep delicate skin happy. If you have little ones in your life, take extra time to prepare well for their needs.

Stock Up on Diapers and Clothes

Keep at least one month of disposable diapers on hand at all times. Remember how quickly these little guys grow. This is easily accomplished by purchasing a month’s supply of the next size up in diapers. Rotate by simply using the smallest sizes.

[Cloth diapers](#) or [dishtowels](#), [diaper pins](#), and [plastic pants](#) to serve as a backup in case your disposable diaper supply runs out. Remember to stock [diaper ointment](#), [petroleum jelly](#), and [baby powder](#) to care for diaper rashes.



Little people go through a lot of clothing in a single day. Whether it is a newborn diaper blowout or a toddler that just loves to explore his world, the clothes get dirty.

Learning to control bodily functions and accidents can create a pile of dirty laundry. Dirt is not a huge concern, but wet clothes need immediate attention as they can quickly wick heat away from the little body. Kids need to be warm and dry.

Add this little nugget into account in your planning. Children grow quickly so it is a really good idea to store larger-size clothing for each child.

Check out our post on [Crisis Laundry Management](#) for some great ideas on how to wash diapers and clothes during an emergency with very little water. Stock up on laundry detergent and prepare some type of clothesline to dry the clothes. Clothes and diapers hung in the sun to dry have the added bonus of UV disinfection. Don't leave them out too long or the sun may fade the colors.

Accidents and Bed Wetting

Keep a supply of [extra-large sized disposable diapers](#) or [Pull-ups](#) for children. In response to a traumatic event, toilet-trained children may revert to wetting their pants. An older child may begin wetting the bed. Be patient, it is not the child's fault. Once the child is secure the problem will resolve itself.



Accidents and bed wetting can be extremely stressful if there is no running water available. A little planning ahead and understanding can make this situation much less stressful for everyone.

Remember that stress, unfamiliar foods, and contaminated water may cause diarrhea. Take this into consideration when determining the amount of toilet paper, diapers or Pull-ups to store.

Child size toothbrushes, toothpaste, baby wash, baby shampoo, baby brush or comb, fingernail clippers, small scissors, and washcloths are all good items to have in your stores.

Stock a generous supply of [baby wipes](#). They can be used for bathing and personal hygiene. Remember that it is vitally important to remain clean during a crisis to avoid the spread of diseases which may be more prevalent during this time.

While soap is best, [hand sanitizer](#) may help prevent the spread of germs and diseases with a limited water supply. Store [sanitizing wipes](#) and disinfectants for maintaining a clean environment. Clean spills and keep surfaces as germ-free as possible.



Dispose of diapers with care. If regular garbage pickup has been disrupted, make sure that diapers are kept in waterproof containers with tight-fitting lids until you can safely dispose of them.

Alternative Toilet Option for Little People

A [small potty chair](#) may be more comfortable for young children. The grown up “alternative toilet options” may be frightening to a young child and create resistance to using the toilet at all.

The bowl may be lined with small bags and disposed of in an airtight bucket after each use or contents can be buried. You may be able to use it a few times before emptying depending on the child (add a little disinfectant after each use).

Remember to take into consideration a child’s natural curiosity. If the child is apt to play in the contents of the bag, it is better to change it after each use. The [small bags](#) are not expensive, plan ahead!



Stock Paper Products

Store a generous amount of [toilet paper](#). Children tend to consume large amounts of [toilet paper](#). Don’t count on this changing just because you are in the middle of an emergency. [Toilet paper](#) is definitely not something that you want to be without!

Store lots of [paper towels](#). Most children have not mastered throwing up into a bag, bowl, or toilet. They are generally just cute, messy, little creatures. If you are practicing emergency sanitation that means that you will have no running water for laundry. You can never store enough [paper towels](#)!

Stock lots and lots of [small plastic bags](#) for using in the [potty chair](#) and disposing of soiled diapers. A small waste can size is perfect. Don't skimp and use plastic grocery bags for this! They will leak and create a mess.

Save plastic buckets with tight-fitting lids for storage of waste products. A used laundry soap bucket works great and is free. Don't underestimate how many you might need. Better to store too many than run short when you need them.

That's All Folks

Advanced preparations may make all the difference in how well you are able to survive a crisis. Learn the tricks and stock up on necessary supplies.

Remember that children reflect the emotions of adults. If you adopt a positive, can-do attitude, your children will likely follow your lead. Be strong and prepare well. Let children take part in the preparations. Practice when you go camping or during pretend play. Make it into a grand adventure!

Thanks for being part of the solution!