A SURVIVAL MOM NO-WORRIES GUIDE

On Your Own and Ready

Printables and Plans for Living Alone After 50



by

Lisa Bedford

The Survival Mom® · thesurvivalmom.com

WELCOME

Before You Start

As I write this in late 2026, more than 24 million Americans age 50 and older live alone. A good third of them say they love it, while 20% talk about loneliness and worries about getting older.

These pages are for anyone who lives alone, whether you got here through a divorce, the loss of a spouse, grown kids moving out, or a life you chose. None of them take long. Most take one cup of coffee and a pen.



How to use this ebook

- **Start with the Home Alone Emergency Sheet.** It covers the worry I hear about most: what to do if something goes wrong and no one is home.
- **Print only what you need.** Every page stands on its own, so print a fresh copy whenever your information changes.
- **Fill in a page, then share it.** Give your check-in buddy their card, and tell one trusted person where your papers are.
- **Keep the finished pages together** in a folder or your grab-and-go binder, so you can find them in a hurry.
- **Date everything with medical information,** and update it when a prescription changes.

Printing tips

Print on regular letter-size paper. The Home Alone Emergency Sheet works best printed front and back, so the medical information stays with the rest. If you'd like to fill in pages on your computer instead, most PDF readers let you add text boxes.

NOTE: “Over 50” covers a lot of ground, from working out every day to getting around with a walker. Some pages will fit you now, and others may fit a future you or a friend today. Take what’s useful now, and save the rest on your computer or in your binder for later.

CONTENTS

What's Inside

THE GUIDE

Over 50 and On Your Own: How to Stay Prepared, Strong, and Connected 4

WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

Home Alone Emergency Sheet 14

My Medical Information 15

YOUR PEOPLE

Check-In Plan Cards 16

Hospital Go-Bag List 17

Ride-Home and Recovery Plan 18

THINGS SOMEONE ELSE USED TO HANDLE

"Who Handled This?" Skills Inventory 19

Trusted Help Directory 20

PAPERS AND MONEY

Papers and Money Checklist 21

OUTAGES AND BAD WEATHER

Outages and Bad Weather on Your Own 22

SUPPLIES SIZED FOR ONE

The Go-Bag Designed for You 23

Food Storage for One: A 3-Week Plan 24

- Standard Plan and Shopping List 25
- Low-Sodium Plan and Shopping List 27
- Low-Glycemic Plan and Shopping List 29
- My Food Storage Plan (worksheet) 31

KEEP GOING

More Help From The Survival Mom 32

THE GUIDE

Over 50 and On Your Own

How to Stay Prepared, Strong, and Connected

AT A GLANCE

Being over 50 and on your own, whether you're widowed, divorced, single, or an empty nester, calls for preparedness strategies that fit just one person. This guide covers six areas: supplies you can carry and reach yourself, handling outages and severe weather solo, a few medical-emergency basics (Medical ID, a Vial of Life checklist, and a small hospital bag), learning the jobs someone else used to handle, staying connected to your people, and getting your papers, money, and health in order. The heart of it is simple: stay connected, stay physically strong, keep healthy habits, and keep your basic preparedness up to date, whatever your health looks like today.

Living alone after 50 can be a very, very good life. Your free time is your own. No one loses the remote control or eats up all the leftovers in the fridge. You can sit down in a cozy corner of your couch and read books all day long, whenever you like. With or without a pet, or two, or five.

But maybe your single status is because you're newly widowed, or maybe the divorce papers came through after 30 years. Maybe the house got extra quiet because the kids are grown and gone. However you got here, you're over 50, on your own, and you may have caught yourself wondering, "Okay. Who's going to handle this now?"

The tough part comes when something goes wrong, and handling it falls on your shoulders.

This stage of life is especially important to me now that I'm over 60. The other day when we were dealing with a huge number of horseflies outside, I told my husband, "You can never die. You can never get sick. Otherwise, who would kill all these flies for me?"

Whether it's a minor inconvenience like horseflies or something much more serious, like a medical emergency when you're alone or dealing with a natural disaster or storm damage, you need to plan and prepare ahead of time. It's about prepping, yes, but also staying focused on your physical health and stamina, staying connected with others, and creating a healthy and wholesome lifestyle that will ensure the next decades are as fulfilling and capable as the ones behind you, maybe even better.

Ask yourself a few quick questions:

- Could you carry your own emergency supplies up your front steps today?
- Could an EMT find your medication list if you couldn't speak?
- Do you know where your breaker box is and which switch runs the fridge?
- Who would you call at 2 a.m. if you needed a ride to the ER?
- Have you done anything this week to keep your legs and balance strong?

If a couple of those made you pause, you're in the right place. Let's go theme by theme.

How This Guide Works

I've split getting prepared into six areas, each one has five or six practical steps. Most of these take less than an hour, and some can be done with a single phone call. Start wherever worries you most.

The Medical Emergency at Home Alone

Nobody likes to think about a medical emergency when there's no one else in the house. I've noticed in social media, this is a recurring question: *What do I do if I have a medical emergency and nobody's home?*

Let's tackle that one first, because after a serious choking incident four years ago, that's still on my mind.

Have a home-alone emergency routine

1. Call 911 first. The most dangerous words in the human language, "It's not so bad." If a symptom is enough to be noticeable, don't wait to see if it passes or call your daughter for her opinion. Even if you can't talk because of the pain level, stay on the line with 911 anyway.
2. If you can, unlock the front door, turn on the porch light, and put the pets in another room with the door closed.
3. Grab your pill bottles and put them in a bag to take with you. Paramedics can learn a lot about your condition just by taking a look at these.
4. Stay near the front door if possible, so EMTs can find you and immediately begin assessing and treating you.

Turn on Medical ID on your phone

Set up Medical ID on your iPhone or Emergency Information on your Android phone so responders can see your conditions, medications, allergies, and emergency contacts without unlocking the phone. Then keep the phone on you, not charging on the kitchen counter.

Instructions for Medical ID (iPhone)

1. Open the **Health** app and tap your profile picture in the top right.
2. Tap **Medical ID**, then **Edit** (or **Get Started**).
3. Add your conditions, medications, allergies, blood type, and emergency contacts.
4. Turn on **Show When Locked** and **Share During Emergency Call**.
5. Tap **Done**.

Instructions for Emergency Information (Android)

1. Open **Settings** and search for "emergency."
2. Tap **Safety & emergency**, then **Medical information** and **Emergency contacts**. Samsung calls it **Safety and emergency** too, and on some phones you'll find it under **About phone > Emergency information**.
3. Add your medical details and contacts.
4. Make sure the option to show it on the lock screen is turned on.

Privacy Concerns

I'm very sensitive about any private information I give out. After you've reviewed the Medical ID or Emergency Information settings and prefer to not answer everything, here are my guidelines:

- Don't add your full name, date of birth, or street address. If your phone is lost or stolen, that's the kind of information identity thieves look for.
- List allergies, current medications, and any health issues that aren't particularly private or describe them in general terms, like "heart condition".
- If you list emergency contacts, use first name or their role (like "daughter" or "next door neighbor") instead of full names.

If you live alone and, especially, if you have significant health and mobility issues, the advantages of having some of this information on your phone, readily available to first responders, outweighs the slight risk of a stranger accessing it.

Post a Vial of Life on the fridge

The Vial of Life is simple and old-school -- on paper -- and that's why it works. There's no need to be connected via WiFi or a smartphone.

You fill out a one-page medical form, put it in a clear plastic bag taped to the front of your refrigerator, and stick one decal on the fridge and one on your front door so EMTs know to look for it. The forms are free to print from their website. Include:

- Name, date of birth, and a recent photo
- Medications and doses (blood thinners and insulin first)
- Conditions, surgeries, allergies, and any implants or pacemaker
- Emergency contacts, doctors, and preferred hospital
- Insurance and Medicare information
- DNR or advance directive note, and where the original is kept
- Who to call about your pets

Remember to date it, and then update it whenever a prescription or some other detail changes.

Keep a small hospital go-bag

If you need to rush to the ER or an ambulance takes you, you want something small you or a neighbor can grab. This is most important for anyone with chronic health conditions, a history of heart or breathing problems, or regular appointments with specialists, because they're more likely to need urgent medical help and more likely to stay longer at a hospital than expected.

Pack a small kit with these items:

- copy of your medication list (grab your actual meds once you call 911 or make the decision to get to a hospital or urgent care)
- insurance cards
- a phone charger/power bank with a long cord (keep the power bank charged)
- reading glasses
- phone numbers on paper
- a toothbrush
- warm socks
- a comfy change of clothes

Assemble this in a small bag, and keep it by the bedroom door, just in case.

Learn the self-Heimlich

I learned how scary this is after choking on a very dry turkey meatball particle, and that was with my husband and kids there to help me. Choking with no one around is even scarier, so let's think about it now instead of later.

Call 911 first so they can find you even if you can't talk. Then do abdominal thrusts on yourself -- a fist just above your belly button, pushed in and up, or lean hard over the back of a sturdy chair or a counter edge. MedlinePlus and the Red Cross both explain it. Figure out now which chair you would use and give this a practice round, without actually coughing anything up!

Preparedness Supplies Sized for One

I've written thousands of words about preparedness/prepping, and nearly everything was written with families in mind. Now that you're living on your own, you need fewer supplies, including food, but you also don't have other people helping you pack up the car for an emergency evacuation. So prep for the household you have.

Buy smaller packages you can carry on your own

A 24-pack of bottled water weighs around 27-28 pounds, and that's a lot to haul up the porch steps or out to the car. Ready.gov recommends one gallon of water per person per day for several days, and I recommend twice that amount, especially if you have pets. However, nobody says it has to come in one heavy load. Look at 6-packs, gallon jugs you can carry one at a time, or a stackable water container you fill where it's stored. These hold 2.5 gallons and would weigh about 20 pounds each, not exactly lightweight, but if you stack them on a wheeled cart or dolly, you can more easily transport the water if you need to.

To go really light, buy supplies in sample or travel sizes. I like to browse Minimus.biz for those.

Build a one-person pantry that won't be overwhelming

Too many ambitious preppers have told me stories of piles of stored food they never used, and the food went stale or attracted pests. A 25-pound bag of rice is a lot of rice for one person, and if you end up never using it, that's money wasted. Since you only need enough food storage for 3-4 weeks (my recommendation), stock single-serve and small cans, pouches of tuna and chicken, quick oats, peanut butter, and freeze-dried meals you can make with just hot water. The good thing about these "just add hot water" pouch meals is that they are typically for one or two servings.

Store it where you can reach it without a ladder

The top shelf of the pantry or a closet is where emergency supplies go to be forgotten. If they require you to stand on a chair or step stool, then never mind. Falls are the leading cause of injury for adults 65 and older, according to the CDC, so it makes more sense to keep everyday and emergency items between knee and shoulder height. Use the high shelves for lightweight, rarely used items, and put a sturdy step stool with a handrail. Look for one rated to hold up to 300 pounds.

Pack a go-bag light enough to carry yourself

My main bug out bag, or go bag, weighs too much for me anymore. I originally packed it about 8 years ago, and a lot has changed since then! For your own bag, a go-bag isn't useful if it stays in the closet because it's too heavy to lift and carry it out to your car. If that's a struggle, lighten it or switch to a rolling bag.

To lighten the weight, add water for a day or two (or keep a large container already in your car), medications, copies of important documents, a charged power bank and charging cord, a hygiene kit, a flashlight or a headlamp, small high-protein snacks, glasses, and a small first aid/medical kit. My guide to building budget bug out bags walks through the basics, and you can scale it down to one person.

Keep a 30-day medication buffer

If you take daily prescriptions, try to stay a few weeks ahead rather than refilling on the last day. Ready.gov suggests talking to your doctor or pharmacist about an emergency supply of medications. Ask whether your insurance allows 90-day fills or early refills. For over-the-counter meds, have an extra for each one you use most often.

Dealing With Outages and Bad Weather On Your Own

When you live alone, a power outage and dealing with weather-related issues are all yours to handle. You're the one figuring out how to get the generator going or maybe how to get the power station set up with an array of

extension cords. If it's a storm rolling in, it's up to you to keep an eye on weather alerts or deal with a leaking roof.

This becomes a lot easier with a plan of action and supplies and gear designed to make these jobs doable, even for someone with a bad back or a bum knee.

A power outage plan with nobody to take shifts

One of your primary goals is to have at least one backup power source. Think about a gas-powered generator that only needs the push of a button to start or, even better, can be started with a remote control. A power station or two can be large enough to keep most of the house running and can be charged with solar panels if the outage goes out for days.

Keep a charged power bank or two for your phone, since your phone is your lifeline. If you use oxygen, a CPAP, or other powered medical equipment, ask your electric company about its medical or critical care registration program. Registration doesn't guarantee your power stays on or comes back first, but it can mean advance notice of planned outages. My post on power outages and home medical equipment walks through backup options.

Finally, add one or more battery-powered light sources to each room -- you never know where you'll be in a nighttime power outage. Headlamps ensure you have your hands free for other tasks.

Take heat and cold seriously

As we get older, our bodies don't regulate temperature as well, and we may not feel thirsty or overheated until we're already in trouble. The CDC notes that adults 65 and older are more prone to heat-related illness, and some medications make it worse. When you live alone, there's no one to say, "You look flushed, you need to sit down and have a glass of water."

Decide now where you'll go if the house gets dangerously hot or cold. It could be a cooling or warming center, a library, or a friend's house with a generator. In winter, layer up and have a plan to stay in the warmest room of the house. My post on staying warm without electricity has plenty of ideas.

Find the shutoffs you can physically turn

When we walked into our house during the big Texas freeze of 2021, the first thing we heard was running water -- water that shouldn't have been running. Within seconds, my husband was out in the backyard turning off our water main. At that time, I had no idea where to find it, nor how to shut it off.

Do you know where your water main, gas shutoff, and breaker box are? More importantly, can you physically turn them and do you have the right tools handy? Some water valves are stiff, buried in a box at the curb, or need a special water meter key. Go try each one now. If you can't budge it, buy the right tool or ask a plumber to replace a stubborn valve.

Gas is the exception. Ready.gov says to shut off natural gas only if you smell gas or hear a hissing sound, then leave and call the gas company from outside. Once it's off, a professional has to turn it back on.

Know when to leave instead of riding it out alone

It's one thing to ride out a storm as a family, with multiple people on hand to deal with most every issue, but it's quite another to be alone. Riding it out alone, with no power, rising heat, and a medical condition is something else. Think about likely scenarios in your area, and decide now what your "go" line will be. For example, if the power is out for more than two days in the summer or winter with no end in sight or if local officials say it's time to evacuate. When you know what that line is, for you, it takes the pressure off any last minute panic when you might not be able to make a sound decision.

An evacuation plan with no one to help load the car

Think about what you can realistically load by yourself in 15 minutes. Keep your go-bag, medications, and pet carrier near the door during storm season, and keep your gas tank at least half full. Pick two destinations, one nearby and one out of the area, and tell someone your plan. If you don't drive or might not be able to, ask your county about special needs or transportation registries for evacuations. My evacuation checklist can help you move faster.

Sometimes, an evacuation doesn't have to be miles away. If a nearby neighbor has a generator, that could be your destination, or if floodwaters are rising, a hotel just a few miles away at a higher elevation might be the safest choice. You want to be able to get to a safer place quickly -- not start off on a long journey to a bug out location that you may or may not reach. Especially if you're on your own.

Things Someone Else Used to Handle

When I told my husband, battling those horseflies, that he'd better not ever die, I wasn't kidding. As women, we come to rely on the guy who can kill a tree roach, turn off the water main in freezing weather, and knows how to jumpstart a car's dead battery. For many women after a gray divorce or widowhood, the hardest moment isn't the big emergency. It's that dead car battery, the tripped breaker, or the generator that won't start because he always handled it. That's a gap in your skill set. Not a failure on your part.

Learn the breaker box and generator

Open your breaker panel on any regular day. Are the switches labeled? If not, flip one at a time and label them with a friend calling out what turned off -- Kitchen, Bedroom #1, Hall Bath, and so on. Learn how to reset a tripped breaker. If you have a generator, start it yourself every month or two, and learn how to fuel it safely, never while it's hot. Start with my post on buying your first generator, or consider a smaller portable power station if pull-starting a generator is hard on your shoulders.

Basic car upkeep

You don't need to rebuild a carburetor or replace the brakes yourself, but you do need to know how to check tire pressure, recognize dashboard warning lights, add washer fluid, and use a portable jump starter. A tire inflator is a lot easier to use than trying to change a flat tire along the side of the road. The right tool for the job makes all the difference in the world.

Know where every account and password is

If your spouse handled the bills, you may be finding accounts you didn't know existed. Make a master list of bank, retirement, insurance, utility, and subscription accounts, and store passwords in a password manager like 1Password, or a written notebook kept somewhere safe. The Grab-n-Go Binder is a great way to keep your important papers together.

Line up trusted repair people

Almost never mentioned, this might be your most important prep. The time to find a plumber is not when water is pouring through the ceiling. Ask friends and neighbors who they use, and save a plumber, electrician, HVAC company, handyman, and mechanic in your phone. Be wary of door-to-door "contractors" after storms; my post on scams after disasters explains why.

One skill you've always let someone else do

As you've been reading this, what's the one skill or task that comes to mind as the one you really, really need to learn. Maybe it's grilling, mowing the lawn, hanging a picture, using a drill, or reading the water meter. Pick something, watch a YouTube tutorial or ask a friend for pointers, and add it to your skillset.

Your People

We were never meant to do life entirely alone. Even the toughest among us need to depend on others, and staying connected is one of the best things you can do for your health. Loneliness has been linked to higher death rates, depression, heart disease, and even cognitive decline -- the one thing you can't risk losing! (If you're also looking out for an older parent, see Preparing Elderly Loved Ones for Emergencies.)

Choose your emergency contact

When there's no spouse and no adult child nearby, your emergency contact might be a sibling, a close friend, a neighbor, or someone from church. If your family is spread out, my guide to a family emergency communication plan works just as well for a circle of friends. Keep your emergency contact consistent across any forms you fill out, but have a second person in mind in case that primary contact is away on a cruise or visiting grandkids.

Daily check-ins (if you need them)

I'll be honest. If you're 58, healthy, and hiking on weekends, a formal daily check-in probably sounds like something your mother would make you do. You don't need one. Coffee with a friend every week and a neighbor who waves when you walk the dog will cover you.

My advice changes if you have a chronic health condition or a disability, if you've fallen before, or if you're recovering from surgery. Just keep it simple -- one text each morning, and your contact should know to personally check up on you if you don't respond after a second text or call within a reasonable amount of time.

Get to know two neighbors

No need to expect your neighbor to be your next BFF. You just need two people nearby who know your name, have your phone number, and would notice if your newspaper piled up. When our neighborhood experienced an 11-day power outage after Hurricane Beryl in 2024, we immediately noticed our next door neighbors had no power on Day 1 and then Day 2. We checked on them and discovered they didn't have a generator, which we were happy to lend them.

A ride-home person for procedures and the ER

Many outpatient procedures with sedation, like a colonoscopy, require a responsible adult to drive you home, and some facilities won't accept a cab or a rideshare (verify with your provider). Figure out who that person is before you schedule. Some Medicare Advantage and private insurance plans offer transportation benefits, but Original Medicare generally doesn't cover routine rides. Check with your insurance company and medical provider to see what's available and whether the transportation meets the facility's requirements.

A plan for who takes your pets

If you were hospitalized tonight, who would feed the dog? When you can plan ahead, a trusted pet or housesitter is ideal, but in a sudden emergency, you might need to ask a friend or neighbor to be your pet's emergency caregiver. Give them a key or the code to your lockbox, and put the plan in writing, along with vet information and feeding instructions. Ready.gov has a pet preparedness guide, and you'll find more in my post about packing a pet evacuation kit.

Papers, Money, and Health

This last section helps make sure you're the one who decides who gets to help you if you can't speak for yourself. It's not exciting, but the few minutes it takes can save a lot of confusion and red tape later. The rest of this section covers keeping scammers away from your money and keeping yourself healthy enough to fully enjoy this chapter of your life.

Power of attorney and a HIPAA authorization

A durable financial power of attorney and a health care power of attorney (sometimes called a medical POA or health care proxy) let someone you trust act for you if you can't. When I think of who will take this role on my behalf, a few things come to mind:

- Are they trustworthy with money and private information?
- Are they willing to take this responsibility?
- Will they follow my wishes, not their own?
- Are they organized?
- Do they live nearby or can travel quickly to be with you?
- Are they younger and healthier, if possible?

Much of the time this is a close family member, but if these questions cause you to doubt that choice, take some time to decide on an alternate. And, you can choose one person to manage things like paperwork and finances and another person to deal with healthcare.

Caring Info has a clear guide to advance care planning. Also sign a HIPAA authorization with each doctor so they can talk to your chosen person. HHS explains what doctors can and can't share with friends and family.

A trusted contact on financial accounts

Here's a simple step you might not know about. Banks and brokerages can let you name a "trusted contact person" on your accounts. This person can't move your money, but the institution can reach out to them if something looks fishy, like a big withdrawal, or they can't reach you. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has resources on protecting older adults from financial exploitation.

It's hard to believe, but every year, Americans over 60 lose billions of dollars to fraudsters. The creativity of these scammers is mind-boggling, and more than once I've had to double check a sketchy text message or email. The Federal Trade Commission tries hard to stay on top of this, and they cover all types of scams on their website.

An emergency fund for a one-income household

With one income (or one Social Security check), there's no second paycheck to handle a sudden, expensive emergency. The CFPB's guide to building an emergency fund has practical tips. This is general information, not financial advice; talk with a trusted advisor about your own situation.

Get a medication review

I've noticed that for every side effect of a prescription drug, another drug is prescribed to deal with that side effect! This can eventually end up with individuals being over-medicated.

Once a year, bring every prescription, supplement, and over-the-counter medication to your doctor or pharmacist (in a bag, the "brown bag review"). Many pharmacies, Medicare, and some insurance companies will do this for free. Ask whether anything interacts, whether anything could make you dizzy (a common cause of falls), and whether anything could be dropped. Update your Vial of Life and Medical ID with whatever changes.

A balance or strength class, and setting up your patient portal

If there's one thing in this whole post that pays off in every other section, it's this: stay strong. If you've been sedentary for a while, that's a hard habit to break. Take it from someone who works from her laptop most of the day!

But one good thing about getting older is this -- a lot of health insurance companies, medical facilities, gyms, and community centers want to help keep us in shape! And, they offer free memberships and discounts.

The bottom line is that everything in this article, from being prepared to handling a power outage or tripping on a rug becomes more manageable the healthier and more fit you are.

When I was close to needing a knee replacement, my primary doctor gave me an aquatic water therapy routine instead, and saved me from that surgery. As we all get older, strength training is emphasized more than anything else. Your health insurance, YMCA, or Medicare Advantage plan may cover gym memberships and other opportunities to get in shape. This is also an easy way to get connected with people around you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I really need a daily check-in if I live alone?

No. For most healthy, active people over 50 or 60, regular casual contact with friends, family, and neighbors is enough. A daily check-in with a friend or relative makes the most sense if you're more fragile (health and/or mobility) and have a chronic health condition, a physical disability, a history of falls, or you're recovering from surgery.

What goes in a Vial of Life?

A one-page medical form listing your medications and doses, conditions, allergies, emergency contacts, doctors, insurance information, a recent photo, and a note on whether you have a DNR or advance directive and where it's kept. Tape it in a clear bag to the front of your refrigerator and put the decals on the fridge and your front door.

What if I don't have a spouse or family nearby to be my emergency contact?

Choose a sibling, close friend, neighbor, or someone from church, ask them directly, and give them a copy of your medication list and doctors' names. Many people also name a backup person, and some name a trusted contact on their bank and investment accounts.

How do I prepare for emergencies when I'm the only one who can carry supplies?

Size everything for one person and one set of arms: smaller water containers you can lift, a pantry of single-serve foods you'll actually eat, supplies stored between knee and shoulder height, and a go-bag light enough to carry or wheel to your car yourself. Also, if you think you may need to quickly evacuate your home, begin loading your car with supplies hours or even days prior to an event like a hurricane.

What legal papers should a single person over 50 have?

At minimum, a durable financial power of attorney, a health care power of attorney, an advance directive, and a HIPAA authorization on file with each doctor. Requirements vary by state, so an elder law attorney can make sure your documents are valid where you live.

What should I do if I have a medical emergency and I'm home alone?

Call 911 first, even if you're not sure it's serious. Then, if you can do it safely, unlock the front door, turn on the porch light, put your pill bottles in a bag, and shut your pets in another room. Sit or lie down near the door and stay on the line with the dispatcher until help arrives. Don't drive yourself if you have chest pain, stroke symptoms, or feel like you might pass out.

The Final Word

Being over 50 and on your own isn't a problem to be solved. It's a season of life, a new chapter, and it can be a good one. Some of us are going strong with only the occasional ache, and some of us are working around real health limits. Either way, the plan is the same. Keep your preparedness supplies sized for one, know what to do

when something goes wrong, learn the skills someone else used to handle, keep your people close, and keep your body as strong as you can for as long as you can.

Home Alone Emergency Sheet

What to do, who to call, and how help gets in when you live alone. Last updated: _____

If something goes wrong

1. **Call 911 first.** Don't wait to see if it passes. If you can't talk, stay on the line.
2. **Unlock the front door and turn on the porch light,** if you can do it safely.
3. **Put your pill bottles in a bag** for the paramedics to take with you.
4. **Put pets in another room** so they can't bolt out the open door.
5. **Sit or lie down near the door** with your phone on speaker, and stay on the line.

Never drive yourself with chest pain, stroke signs, or if you feel like you might pass out. **Stroke signs (BE FAST):** Balance, Eyes, Face, Arm, Speech, Time to call 911.

How help gets in

My address _____

Cross street or landmark _____

Lockbox location _____ **Code** _____

Other way in (gate code, spare key) _____

Smart911 profile? ☐ Yes ☐ No

My people

Emergency contact _____ **Phone** _____

Relationship _____

Backup contact _____ **Phone** _____

Relationship _____

Neighbor with a key _____ **Phone** _____

Daily check-in with _____ **By (time)** _____

My Medical Information

For paramedics and the ER. Update it whenever a prescription changes. Last updated: _____

Full name _____ **Date of birth** _____

Blood thinner? ☐ No ☐ Yes, name: _____

Allergies _____

Health conditions _____

_____

Devices (pacemaker, CPAP, oxygen) _____

Medications

Medication	Dose	When I take it

Doctors and pharmacy

Primary doctor _____ **Phone** _____

Specialist _____ **Phone** _____

Pharmacy _____ **Phone** _____

Preferred hospital _____

Insurance plan _____

Power of attorney / health care proxy _____

My pets

Pets at home _____

Who takes them _____ **Phone** _____

Vet _____ **Phone** _____

YOUR PEOPLE

Check-In Plan Cards

Recovering from a surgery or feeling frail, fill in both cards. Keep one, and give the other to your check-in buddy.

MY COPY

My Daily Check-In

I check in with _____ **By (time)** _____

How: ☐ Text ☐ Call ☐ App

Backup person _____ **Phone** _____

If my buddy misses a check-in, I'll _____

My check-in buddy's address _____

_____

✂ cut here -

FOR MY CHECK-IN BUDDY

If you don't hear from me

My name _____ **I check in by** _____

My address _____

1. Call me twice. No answer by _____? Go to step 2.
2. Call my neighbor _____ at _____. They have a key.
3. Still nothing? Call police non-emergency at _____ and ask for a welfare check.

Lockbox location / code _____

My doctor _____ **Pets inside** _____

Hospital Go-Bag List

When you live alone, nobody's coming by with your charger. Pack it now.

Papers

- ☐ Photo ID
- ☐ Insurance and Medicare cards (copies)
- ☐ A copy of My Medical Information (page 5)
- ☐ Power of attorney and HIPAA forms (copies)
- ☐ List of phone numbers on paper, in case your phone dies
- ☐ A little cash for the vending machine

Health

- ☐ Glasses and case, or contact supplies
- ☐ Hygiene kit (don't assume the hospital will have your preferred toothpaste, lotion, etc.)
- ☐ Anything part of your daily health routine
- ☐ All current prescription medications
- ☐ CPAP machine

Comfort

- ☐ Phone charger with a long cord (6–10 ft)
- ☐ Non-skid socks or slippers
- ☐ Lightweight robe or cardigan/hoodie
- ☐ A change of loose, easy clothes for going home
- ☐ Hairbrush, hair ties, hair clip
- ☐ Earplugs and an eye mask
- ☐ Book, puzzle book, or tablet and earbuds
- ☐ A favorite comfy blanket
- ☐ Your own pillow, if allowed

Practical

- ☐ Small notebook and pen for what the doctors say
- ☐ Spare house key for whoever feeds the pets
- ☐ Pet care instructions

Leave at home: jewelry, large amounts of cash, and anything you'd hate to lose.

My bag is kept _____ **Who knows where it is** _____

YOUR PEOPLE

Ride-Home and Recovery Plan

Many surgery centers won't send you home after sedation without a ride. Line it up first.

Procedure _____ **Date** _____

Where _____ **Check-in time** _____

Getting there and back

	Name	Phone
Drives me there		
Drives me home		
Backup driver		
Checks on me the first night		

The first week

Job	Who's doing it	Phone
Groceries		
Pharmacy pickup		
Pet care		
Ride to follow-up visit		
Mail and trash		

Before I leave the hospital

- ☐ What can't I do, and for how long?
- ☐ Which new medicines do I take, and when?
- ☐ What symptoms mean I should call you?
- ☐ Who do I call after hours?

Set up at home first

- ☐ Easy meals in the freezer or pantry
- ☐ Everyday things at waist height
- ☐ Night-lights on the way to the bathroom
- ☐ Phone charger by the bed

THINGS SOMEONE ELSE USED TO HANDLE

"Who Handled This?" Skills Inventory

List the jobs a spouse or someone else used to do. Then pick one to learn each month.

Job	Who did it before	Now I'll...	Who can teach me
Paying the bills		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Taxes		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Insurance renewals		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Accounts and passwords		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Retirement and investments		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Breaker box		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Water shutoff		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Generator or power station		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Car maintenance		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Furnace filters, smoke alarms		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Yard work		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Small repairs		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
Wi-Fi, phone, and devices		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	
		☐ Do it ☐ Learn ☐ Hire	

This month I'll learn _____ **By (date)** _____

THINGS SOMEONE ELSE USED TO HANDLE

Trusted Help Directory

Ask friends and neighbors who they trust, and fill this in before you need it.

Type of help	Company / name	Phone	Notes
Plumber			
Electrician			
Heating and A/C			
Roofer			
Tree service			
Handyman			
Appliance repair			
Locksmith			
Pest control			
Mechanic / towing			
Pet sitter			
Lawn care			

My insurance

Homeowners/renters _____ **Policy #** _____

Claims phone _____ **Agent & phone** _____

Auto insurance _____ **Roadside help #** _____

Papers and Money Checklist

Make sure the right person can act for you and keep scammers away from your money.

Done	Item	Where it's kept	Who has a copy
☐	Durable financial power of attorney		
☐	Health care power of attorney or proxy		
☐	Advance directive / living will		
☐	HIPAA authorization on file with each doctor		
☐	Will or trust		
☐	Beneficiaries up to date (life insurance, retirement accounts)		
☐	Trusted contact named on bank and investment accounts		
☐	Credit frozen at Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion		
☐	Apple Legacy Contact or Google Inactive Account Manager set up		
☐	Password manager or password list		
☐	Phone passcode shared with one trusted person		
☐	Family safe word chosen		
☐	Bank's fraud phone number saved		
☐	Copies of all of the above in my grab-and-go binder		

My attorney _____ **Phone** _____

Financial advisor or banker _____ **Phone** _____

Executor _____ **Phone** _____

Laws vary by state. Use an elder law attorney or your state's official forms for legal documents, and ask your bank what it offers for trusted contacts and fraud alerts.

Outages and Bad Weather on Your Own

Nobody's there to take a shift with the lanterns, so plan it now.

Before the storm

- ☐ Set up one "base camp" room on the ground floor
- ☐ Headlamp plus a lantern in the bathroom and bedroom
- ☐ Charge power banks and the phone
- ☐ Fill water containers you can lift
- ☐ Freeze gel packs for a meds cooler
- ☐ Fill the car's gas tank
- ☐ Get small bills in cash
- ☐ Tell my check-in buddy my plan
- ☐ Sleep downstairs until power is back

During the outage

- ☐ Turn phone on Low Power Mode right away
- ☐ Text instead of calling
- ☐ Check in twice a day, not once
- ☐ Never run a generator or grill indoors
- ☐ Test the CO detector batteries
- ☐ Skip ladders, chainsaws, and heavy hauling
- ☐ Leave a note on the door if I go out
- ☐ Open one small can at a time; no leftovers

My plan

My base camp room _____

If it's too hot or cold, I'll go to _____ **Phone** _____

Nearest cooling / warming center _____

I'll leave if _____

Evacuation destination _____ **Phone** _____

Water shutoff is _____ **Breaker box is** _____

Gas company emergency # _____ **Power outage #** _____

Check-in buddy _____ **Times** _____

SUPPLIES SIZED FOR ONE

The Go-Bag Designed for You

Only the most useful essentials, in a bag you can carry by yourself.

The essentials

- ☐ Water bottle with a built-in filter
- ☐ 1-3 days of food bars or pouches, depends on weight
- ☐ A 7-day supply of medications, plus my med list
- ☐ Copies of ID and insurance cards
- ☐ Cash in small bills
- ☐ Phone charger and/or a charged power bank
- ☐ Headlamp and extra batteries
- ☐ Spare glasses

Comfort and care

- ☐ One change of clothes, add a warm layer in the fall
- ☐ Rain poncho
- ☐ Travel-size toiletries and wet wipes
- ☐ Small first aid kit
- ☐ Masks and hand sanitizer

Small but mighty

- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Spare house and car keys
- ☐ Notepad, pen, and a paper list of phone numbers
- ☐ Zip bags for wet or dirty things
- ☐ Pet food, leash, and vet records, if you have a pet

Packing tips

- **Weigh it.** Carry it to the car and back. If that's hard, take something out.
- **Go small.** Travel sizes save space and weight. Minimus.biz sells brand-name minis, and the travel aisle and hotel toiletries work too.
- **Pick the right bag.** A rolling carry-on or a backpack with a hip belt is easier on your back than a duffel.
- **Pack by category** in zip bags, so you can find things fast.
- **Check it twice a year,** when the clocks change. Swap out food, meds, and batteries.
- **Keep it by the door** or in the car, not in the back of a closet.

My go-bag is kept _____ **Last checked** _____



SUPPLIES SIZED FOR ONE

Food Storage for One: A 3-Week Plan

Most food storage advice is written for a family of four. This plan is sized for one person, for 21 days, using shelf-stable food you can store in a pantry or closet. Pick and choose what works for your likes/dislikes, budget, and storage space. Food storage is not a one-size-fits-all, but you can easily adapt this plan to suit you.



How to use these pages

- **Pick a plan:** the Standard plan, the Low-Sodium plan, or the Low-Glycemic plan. Each has a one-week menu you repeat three times, plus a 21-day shopping list.
- **Mix and match.** Swap in foods you like better. A food you won't eat is wasted shelf space.
- **Fill in the worksheet** at the back to build your own version.
- **Eat what you store.** Use the oldest items first and replace them as you go.

Before you shop

- **Water:** at least 1 gallon a day for drinking and basic hygiene, so 21 gallons, plus a little extra for cooking and pets Store containers you can lift by yourself.
- **A way to heat water:** keep a camp stove or other safe outdoor cooking method and fuel, and never use one indoors. Know which meals need no cooking at all.
- **A manual can opener,** plus a spare.
- **Small packages:** single-serve cups and small cans mean no leftovers to spoil when the fridge is off.

A note on special diets: These menus are general examples, not medical advice. If you have diabetes, kidney disease, heart failure, high blood pressure, or food allergies, or you take a blood thinner, ask your doctor or a registered dietitian which plan fits you.

PLAN 1 OF 3

Standard Plan

One week of meals. Repeat it three times for 21 days. Swap any meal for another on the same row.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Day 1	Oatmeal with raisins and powdered milk	Tuna pouch on crackers, canned peaches	Chili with beans over rice	Peanut butter on crackers
Day 2	Granola with shelf-stable milk	Chicken noodle soup, crackers	Spaghetti with jarred sauce, green beans	Applesauce cup
Day 3	Just-add-water pancakes with syrup	Peanut butter and jelly tortilla, fruit cup	Canned chicken and rice with mixed vegetables	Trail mix
Day 4	Oatmeal with peanut butter	Refried bean burrito with salsa	Canned beef stew, corn	Raisins
Day 5	Cold cereal with shelf-stable milk	Salmon pouch on crackers, pineapple cup	Boxed mac and cheese with tuna and peas	Pudding cup
Day 6	Cream of wheat with dried fruit	Vegetable soup, crackers	Lentil soup over rice	Mixed nuts
Day 7	Granola bar, fruit cup	Chickpea salad with olive oil and dried herbs	Canned chili with just-add-water cornbread	Hot cocoa

Tips for this plan

- This plan is about convenience. Many meals need only hot water or no cooking at all.
- Canned soups, chili, stew, and boxed mac and cheese are high in sodium. If that's a concern, see the Low-Sodium plan.
- Add a daily multivitamin if your doctor approves, since fresh produce could be limited.

PLAN 1 OF 3

Shopping List: 21 Days

Servings for one person for three weeks. Check the serving size on each label, since one package may hold several servings. For 21 days, see the second column for the quantity needed.

Item	21 days	Item	21 days
☐ **Applesauce cup**	3	☐ Jelly	3
☐ **Boxed macaroni and cheese**	3	☐ Just-add-water cornbread mix	3
☐ **Canned beef stew**	3	☐ Just-add-water pancake mix	3
☐ **Canned chicken (small can)**	3	☐ Nonfat powdered milk	6
☐ **Canned chickpeas (1/2 cup)**	3	☐ Nuts (1/4 cup)	3
☐ **Canned chili with beans**	6	☐ Oatmeal (quick or old-fashioned)	6
☐ **Canned fruit cup**	12	☐ Olive oil	3
☐ **Canned lentil soup**	3	☐ Pasta (2 oz dry)	3
☐ **Canned refried beans (1/2 cup)**	3	☐ Pasta sauce (1/2 cup)	3
☐ **Canned soup**	6	☐ Peanut butter (2 tbsp)	9
☐ **Canned vegetable (small can)**	12	☐ Pudding cup	3
☐ **Cold cereal**	3	☐ Raisins (small box)	6
☐ **Crackers (sleeve)**	15	☐ Rice (white or instant)	9
☐ **Cream of wheat or grits**	3	☐ Salmon pouch	3
☐ **Dried fruit (1/4 cup)**	3	☐ Salsa	3
☐ **Flour tortillas**	6	☐ Shelf-stable milk (single carton)	6
☐ **Granola**	3	☐ Syrup	3
☐ **Granola bar**	3	☐ Trail mix (1/4 cup)	3
☐ **Hot cocoa packet**	3	☐ Tuna pouch	6

PLAN 2 OF 3

Low-Sodium Plan

One week of meals. Repeat it three times for 21 days. Swap any meal for another on the same row.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Day 1	Oatmeal with raisins and powdered milk	Low-sodium tuna on unsalted crackers, peaches in juice	Homemade chili: no-salt beans and tomatoes, chili powder, rice	Unsalted peanut butter on unsalted crackers
Day 2	Shredded wheat with shelf-stable milk	Low-sodium chicken noodle soup, unsalted crackers	Spaghetti with no-salt-added sauce, green beans	Unsweetened applesauce cup
Day 3	Oatmeal with cinnamon and dried fruit	Unsalted peanut butter and jelly tortilla, fruit cup	No-salt-added canned chicken with rice and mixed vegetables	Unsalted trail mix
Day 4	Oatmeal with unsalted peanut butter	Black bean burrito: rinsed no-salt beans, low-sodium salsa	Low-sodium beef or vegetable soup, corn	Raisins
Day 5	Shredded wheat with shelf-stable milk	Low-sodium salmon on unsalted crackers, pineapple in juice	Pasta with olive oil, garlic powder, low-sodium tuna, and peas	Unsalted nuts
Day 6	Oatmeal with raisins	Low-sodium vegetable soup, unsalted crackers	Lentils (dry, cooked) with no-salt tomatoes over rice	Unsweetened applesauce cup
Day 7	Shredded wheat with shelf-stable milk, fruit cup	Chickpea salad: rinsed no-salt chickpeas, olive oil, lemon pepper	Homemade chili (see Day 1) with unsalted crackers	Hot cocoa made with powdered milk

Tips for this plan

- Look for labels that say no salt added or low sodium. On a label, low sodium means 140 mg or less per serving.
- Rinse canned beans and vegetables before eating to wash off some of the salt.
- Season with salt-free blends, garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, cinnamon, lemon pepper, and vinegar.
- Skip ramen, bouillon, canned stew, and seasoned rice or pasta mixes. They are among the saltiest pantry foods.

PLAN 2 OF 3

Shopping List: Low-Sodium, 21 Days

Servings for one person for three weeks. Check the serving size on each label, since one package may hold several servings. For 21 days, see the second column for the quantity needed.

Item	21 days	Item	21 days
☐ **Applesauce cup**	6	☐ No-salt-added diced tomatoes (1/2 can)	9
☐ **Dried fruit (1/4 cup)**	3	☐ No-salt-added pasta sauce (1/2 cup)	3
☐ **Dry lentils (1/4 cup)**	3	☐ Nonfat powdered milk	6
☐ **Flour tortillas**	6	☐ Oatmeal (quick or old-fashioned)	12
☐ **Fruit cup in juice**	12	☐ Olive oil	6
☐ **Jelly**	3	☐ Pasta (2 oz dry)	6
☐ **Low-sodium canned soup**	9	☐ Raisins (small box)	9
☐ **Low-sodium salmon pouch**	3	☐ Rice (plain, not seasoned)	9
☐ **Low-sodium salsa**	3	☐ Shelf-stable milk (single carton)	9
☐ **Low-sodium tuna pouch**	6	☐ Shredded wheat (no salt added)	9
☐ **No-salt-added beans (1/2 cup)**	9	☐ Unsalted nuts (1/4 cup)	6
☐ **No-salt-added canned chicken**	3	☐ Unsalted peanut butter (2 tbsp)	9
☐ **No-salt-added canned vegetable**	12	☐ Unsalted-top crackers (sleeve)	18
☐ **No-salt-added chickpeas (1/2 cup)**	3	☐ Unsweetened cocoa powder	3

PLAN 3 OF 3

Low-Glycemic Plan

One week of meals. Repeat it three times for 21 days. Swap any meal for another on the same row.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Day 1	Old-fashioned oats with walnuts and cinnamon	Tuna with olive oil on whole-grain crispbread, green beans	Chili made with beans and canned chicken, no rice	Almonds
Day 2	Old-fashioned oats with peanut butter	Lentil soup, whole-grain crispbread	Whole-wheat pasta (cooked firm) with sauce and canned chicken	Peanut butter on crispbread
Day 3	Shelf-stable milk and a handful of nuts with dried apricots	Salmon on crispbread, three-bean salad	Pearl barley with canned chicken and mixed vegetables	Pumpkin or sunflower seeds
Day 4	Old-fashioned oats with seeds	Black bean and corn salad with salsa	Lentils (dry, cooked) with diced tomatoes and spinach	Almonds
Day 5	Shelf-stable milk, peanut butter on crispbread	Chickpea salad with olive oil and herbs	Tuna and white bean skillet with green beans	Pear or peach cup in juice, drained
Day 6	Old-fashioned oats with walnuts	Split pea or bean soup, crispbread	Pearl barley with salmon and spinach	Seeds
Day 7	Shelf-stable milk, nuts, dried apricots	Hummus from canned chickpeas, crispbread	Bean chili with canned chicken (see Day 1)	Peanut butter on crispbread

Tips for this plan

- Choose old-fashioned or steel-cut oats over instant, pearl barley and lentils over white rice, and whole-wheat pasta cooked firm.
- Build meals around protein, beans, and non-starchy vegetables, with healthy fats like nuts, seeds, and olive oil.
- Choose fruit packed in juice or water, drain it, and keep portions small. Skip syrup, sugary cereal, and pancake mixes.
- Read labels for added sugar, especially in pasta sauce, peanut butter, and granola.

PLAN 3 OF 3

Shopping List: Low-Glycemic, 21 Days

Servings for one person for three weeks. Check the serving size on each label, since one package may hold several servings. For 21 days, see the second column for the quantity needed.

Item	21 days	Item	21 days
☐ **Canned bean or split pea soup**	3	☐ Old-fashioned or steel-cut oats	12
☐ **Canned beans (1/2 cup)**	15	☐ Olive oil	9
☐ **Canned chicken (small can)**	12	☐ Pasta sauce, no sugar added (1/2 cup)	3
☐ **Canned chickpeas (1/2 cup)**	6	☐ Peanut butter, no sugar added (2 tbsp)	12
☐ **Canned diced tomatoes (1/2 can)**	9	☐ Pearl barley (1/4 cup dry)	6
☐ **Canned lentil soup**	3	☐ Salmon pouch	6
☐ **Canned spinach or greens**	6	☐ Salsa	3
☐ **Canned vegetable (small can)**	12	☐ Seeds (1/4 cup)	9
☐ **Dried apricots (4 halves)**	6	☐ Shelf-stable milk (single carton)	9
☐ **Dry lentils (1/4 cup)**	3	☐ Tuna pouch	6
☐ **Fruit cup in juice**	3	☐ Whole-grain crispbread	24
☐ **Nuts (1/4 cup)**	18	☐ Whole-wheat pasta (2 oz dry)	3

WORKSHEET

My Food Storage Plan

My plan: ☐ Standard ☐ Low-sodium ☐ Low-glycemic ☐ My own

Foods I can't eat (allergies, doctor's orders) _____

Foods I don't like _____

Comfort foods I'd want on a hard day _____

How I'll heat water in an outage _____

Meals I'd happily eat again and again

Breakfasts	Lunches	Dinners	Snacks and drinks

What I'll store

Food	Servings needed (21 days)	Have	Need to buy	Where I keep it	Use by

Water stored (gallons, goal 21+) _____

KEEP GOING

More Help From The Survival Mom

Each of these pages started with a post on my site. When you're ready to go further, here's where to look.

Living Alone After 50

The full guide these printables come from.
thesurvivalmom.com/living-alone-after-50

Grab-and-Go Binder

Where to keep these pages, plus every other document you'd need after a disaster.
thesurvivalmom.com/a-prepping-essential-the-grab-n-go-binder

How to Survive a Power Outage

A day-by-day plan, from the first three days to three weeks or more.
thesurvivalmom.com/preparing-power-outage

Power Outages and Home Medical Equipment

For anyone who relies on oxygen, a CPAP, or refrigerated medicine.
thesurvivalmom.com/medical-equipment-power-outage

How to Avoid Scams After a Disaster

The tricks storm scammers use and how to hire help safely.
thesurvivalmom.com/scams-fraud-after-disasters

