



## Ladies Have You Heard?

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Home Economist

### Are You Prepared For A Winter Emergency?

Whether you are an older adult or live alone you need to be prepared for winter storms. Icy sidewalks, snow blocked driveways and stalled transit systems can keep you house bound for several days. If this happens, there's no need to panic — if you make the following preparations before a storm catches you by surprise.

First, make a list of emergency telephone numbers and keep it by the phone. The list should include phone numbers of your family, a neighbor, the police, fire department, Red Cross, doctor and drugstore. Also, list the telephone number of your heating supplier, furnace repairman, plumber and landlord if you rent.

Then, stock your food supplies so these items will be on hand: dry milk, dried fruit, hot and cold cereal, canned fruit juice, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, canned milk, canned meat or fish, soups, peanut butter and jelly, crackers, canned fruits and vegetables, as well as foods you need for any special diet.

Next, put together a kit of emergency supplies and be sure to place them in a handy location: hand operated can opener, flashlight with extra batteries, pet food if you have a pet, extra blankets, bottled water, matches, candle and candle holder, ice melter for walks and outside steps,

toilet paper, first aid kit, and transistor or battery-operated radio.

In addition follow these tips for safety:

— Ask a family member or neighbor to check on you at least daily during bad weather.

— Keep three days' supply of food and a full week's supply of medicine on hand.

— Dress warmly, using layers of clothes. Cover your head, hands, and feet if you are cold.

— Be sure space heaters are properly vented and away from flammable objects. Do NOT use your kitchen range for additional heat — put on an extra sweater instead.

— Arrange a run for your pet so you don't have to go out, perhaps a hook and long chain mounted outside your door.

— Consider giving a family member or neighbor a key to your home so someone can come and help if you are in trouble.

— Avoid walking when it's icy. If you are prepared, you probably can avoid going out until walks and roads are clear.

— Be careful about shoveling heavy snow if you're not accustomed to sustained physical activity. There is probably someone in your neighborhood who can help you with this.

## Caution: Food and Drugs Can Interact

NEWARK, Del. — Americans swallow more than 45 billion doses of prescription drugs each year, yet many know little about how these drugs can interact with specific foods and beverages.

Some drugs affect the way your body uses certain foods. And some

foods cause certain drugs to work faster, slower, or not at all, says University of Delaware Extension Home Economist Claudia Holden. The wrong combination of foods and drugs can cause adverse side effects. In rare instances these might even prove fatal.

When the doctor says to take a drug with water, some people think milk, soda pop or fruit juice will do just as well, but this can be a serious mistake, Holden says. The calcium in milk and other dairy products impairs the absorption of tetracycline, a widely used antibiotic. Certain other drugs dissolve in the stomach instead of the intestines when they are taken with soda or juice instead of water. Thus, the body can't absorb them as well. On the other hand, if your blood is low in iron, it may be a good idea to take your iron supplement with fruit juice. Vitamin C promotes the absorption of iron into the bloodstream.

Large amounts of liver and leafy vegetables can reduce the effectiveness of anticoagulants because the vitamin K in these foods promotes blood clotting — the opposite of what the drug is meant to accomplish.

On the other hand, leafy green vegetables are important for women taking oral contraceptives. Birth control pills deplete the blood levels of certain B vitamins, notably folic acid and vitamin B<sub>6</sub>. In most healthy women who eat a well-balanced diet, the lowered vitamin level is not alarming, Holden says. However, low income women and others who may eat less nutritious meals should make a special effort to include dark green leafy vegetables.

Holden says the most hazardous food and drug interaction involves

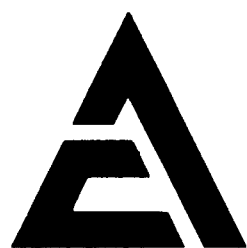
drugs sometimes prescribed for severe depression or high blood pressure, and foods containing tyramine. The drugs involved contain monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors. Tyramine in foods can interact with the MAO inhibitors causing a dangerous rise in blood pressure, severe headaches, and sometimes brain hemorrhage and death.

To prevent the problem, avoid aged and fermented foods such as aged cheeses, Chianti wine, pickled herring, pepperoni and salami. Other problem foods are yogurt, sour cream, chicken livers, canned figs, bananas, avocados, broad beans such as fava beans, soy sauce, active yeast preparations, beer, sherry, and any wine in large quantities. Coffee, chocolate, cola, and raisins are also reported to react adversely with MAO inhibitors.

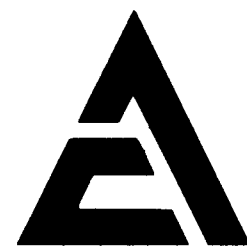
Holden says some over-the-counter drugs can also react adversely with particular foods. The most common offenders are antacids and laxatives. These drugs can interfere with the absorption of vitamins D, K, and carotene, a substance the body converts to vitamin A.

Chronic use of antacids containing aluminum can cause phosphate depletion, which can lead to weakness and loss of appetite.

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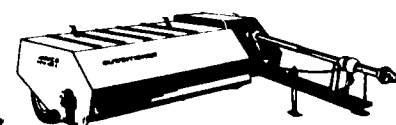
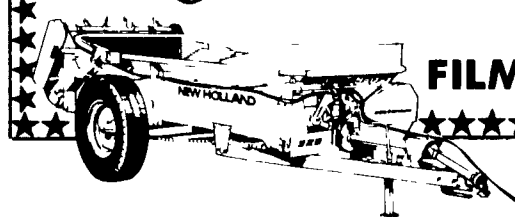
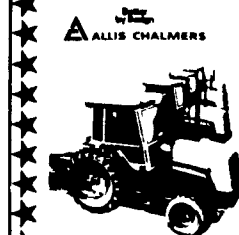
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