

I'm proud to begin sharing for the first time some of the letters to the editor we receive. If you want to communicate with the editor of Off The Grid News, please email [\*\*editor@OffTheGridNews.com\*\*](mailto:editor@OffTheGridNews.com) (If you have questions about your subscription, please contact [\*\*info@OffTheGridNews.com\*\*](mailto:info@OffTheGridNews.com))

**Dear Editor:**

When you were discussing the use of a slingshot to protect against a pack of ravenous dogs, it brought a recent event to mind. About seven months ago I felt inspired that my family needed two large dogs to protect it. Listening to the spirit, I went to the humane society and picked up two puppies who looked like they would grow into large dogs. About a month ago that choice paid off. My 13-year-old son was outside late in the evening with the two 8-month-old puppies (Shardas and Gammon) and our small 6-year-old dog (Puff). The adult dog is very protective, but only weighs about 20 lbs.

A huge mountain lion entered our yard. Led by the Puff, Shardas and Gammon assisted in driving the lion off. I know the lion was real and not a figment of an overactive imagination because the lion headed up to the neighbor's house and killed their three goats. Fish and game came out to the neighbor's house. They confirmed that it was a mountain lion and arranged for a hunter to come in and take the animal, as it clearly presented a risk to people and domestic animals. When the lion was killed, it was discovered that she was an older lion, losing her teeth, and looking for an easy kill. That is what brought her in near human homes. I am very blessed that my son is alive and I thank God for the inspiration to get the dogs in time that they would be large enough to drive off the cat. (I really wasn't particularly excited about adding two more dogs to the family)

The point of the story is that dogs can also be a good means of defense. Most dogs will be instinctively protective of its pack, which is what you are to your dog. My dog is a strong and stable leader and you have a built-in family defense. Dogs can be a great deterrent to would-be evil doers; especially if they are backed up by well trained, armed humans.

**Sincerely**

**Kirra L.**

**Editor:** Kirra, thanks for your message. Your story is a great reminder of how well-laid plans can help in unintended ways. Law enforcement officials have long talked of how a criminal fears an aggressive guard dog more than a homeowner with a weapon, but clearly the natural world would rather avoid a defiant dog as well! As the economy worsens, there will be more threats from aggressive criminals, and post-collapse, we could see an explosion in wildlife, so having a few canine friends around sounds like an important part of the self-defense plan.

## **Another Reminder of the Need to Prepare**

One of my favorite quotes about preparedness is that good preparations help us whether bad things happen or not. I've been thinking about that a lot lately because of the volcanic eruptions in Iceland and the devastating effect they are having on millions of people.

For example, we've all read how airlines have been affected by the no-fly rules, and it's easy from there to understand that the airlines are losing money. But consider the millions of passengers who would have flown home or to business destinations who have not been able to complete their journeys. Reports of passengers who have been stranded and are completely broke are growing, and it's painful to contemplate how desperate they must be, stuck in an airport in a foreign country with no money and no way to get home to family and work.

I'm sure there are also many more stories of regular delivery of medication and other important supplies that are often transported by air that have been affected. If the eruption was much worse, I've been told it would begin to affect technology far beyond commercial airline flights.

And let's not forget that volcanic eruptions can bring about substantial climate change-the authentic kind, mind you-and that climate change can lead to societal unrest, like the French Revolution, which historians now believe was in part the result of a famine which was brought about by volcanic eruptions in Iceland.

In just a few short years we've seen natural disasters altering the lives of individuals, communities and now entire continents. There was Katrina, then the Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquakes in Chile, Haiti and China, and most recently the volcanic eruptions disrupting travel and commerce in Europe.

Few places in the world are safe from any kind of natural disaster, so use each of these events as a reminder to evaluate your own personal plans and the natural disasters that may pose a risk to you and your loved ones. Consider how you might be affected, and what your plans should be, to deal with catastrophic natural disasters in your community.

### **Questions to ask yourself:**

What if the power is out?

What if the banking system isn't working?

What if the roads are closed?

What if the grocery stores have no food?

What if communications are disrupted?

What if there is a deadly, contagious disease spreading?

What if there are no emergency services (fire, ambulance, police) functioning?

What if there are gangs roaming the community?

What if any of the above persists for more than a few hours or days?

### **Building Your Family's Natural Home Medicine Cabinet**

In a post-collapse survival situation (or even just life under ObamaCare) having recourse to your own private, natural medicine cabinet will be critical. You can begin to prepare now by stockpiling time-tested treatments that will allow you to delay or even avoid a trip to the Doctor. Included in the ailments you can treat on your own are: sore throats, infections, toothaches, back aches, stomach pains, chest pains, fever, cough and headaches. Here are some easily obtainable items that can go a long way toward treating the most common health problems.

#### **Sore Throats**

Sore throats are a common symptom of several diseases and are especially common in children. Usually these ailments are minor and will cure themselves in a few days. What is needed is a way to relieve the symptoms and prevent the infection from becoming worse. Gargling rinses of salt water, baking soda, green tea extract or garlic can all provide relief and help kill the streptococcus bacteria that are multiplying in your throat. Begin gargling as soon as you feel the first signs of a sore throat (usually a tickle) and continue until the symptoms disappear.

#### **Inflammation**

Inflammation can range from simple soreness after muscular exertion to chronic diseases such as arthritis. Nature provides us with several treatments for inflammation that allow us to avoid the side effects associated with man-made inflammatory drugs. Among its many other positive health effects, resveratrol has been shown to be an effective anti-inflammatory. This is the ingredient that gives red wine its health benefits and is now available in capsule form. SAME, available in health food stores, is also a good treatment for inflammation. It can help with the pain brought on by osteoarthritis and has proved as effective as the leading arthritis medication, Celebrex.

## **Headaches,**

Headaches are a common problem caused by numerous conditions and it can be extremely difficult to pinpoint the exact cause. A recurring headache could signal the existence of something more serious, but most headaches are caused by tension, dehydration and other minor problems. Magnesium supplements can help alleviate many of these minor headaches. Other supplements that can help are iron and CoQ10. Women are especially susceptible to iron deficiency and often suffer from headaches during menstruation.

## **Chronic Sinus Infections**

This condition is usually caused by a fungal infection. It is fairly common in people who spend a lot of time in the waters of humid environments. Oil of oregano is a simple, natural product that can help fight this fungal infection. Oil of oregano can be found in health food stores in capsule form.

## **Intestinal Gas**

Activated charcoal is very effective at eliminating gas and should be kept in all medical kits for use in cases of accidental poisoning. Fennel seed, common in Indian cuisine, is also effective in calming the stomach and intestines, and aiding in digestion.

## **Indigestion and Heartburn**

These conditions are most commonly caused by lifestyle, diet and nutrient deficiencies. Avoiding alcohol, spicy foods and over-the-counter pain medications will alleviate most symptoms. Mastic gum capsules and Quercetin are two supplements that can help with heartburn. Quercetin is a natural antihistamine found in red onions and red apple peel that can also be effective in relieving seasonal allergies.

## **Vitamin D**

Vitamin D is an effective treatment for many types of infections, especially colds, flu, respiratory and middle ear infections. An hour of sunlight a day can produce 10,000 IU of vitamin D. If you can't get the sun exposure, supplements can give you the needed dosage. Children are especially susceptible to vitamin D deficiency.

## **Bronchitis**

Sulfur, which was commonly used to treat and prevent infection before antibiotics, is still an effective treatment and can be purchased over the counter. Sulfur supplements can be found in health food stores. An especially effective form is called N-acetyl Cysteine (NAC).

## **Hydrogen Peroxide**

No home medical kit is complete without this simple, highly useful substance. Besides being effective in cleaning wounds, it can also be used to treat gum disease, toothaches, sore throats and ear infections. At the first sign of an ear infection, begin rinsing the ear with peroxide several times a day. Remember that ear infections in children can be serious and must be monitored closely.

## **Toothaches**

The old treatment of using cloves to treat toothaches is still one of the most effective treatments, even in a world of thousands of man-made medicines. Depending on your condition, a clove or clove oil can be applied to a bad tooth to ease the pain until the problem can be treated. Clove oil has been shown to be as effective as benzocaine in treating dental pain.

## **Food Poisoning**

Food safety should always be practiced, but even the best efforts can't always prevent food contamination and food poisoning. This is a serious condition and needs to be treated quickly. To prevent food-borne bacteria, use a variety of powerful spices such as garlic, chile, onion, oregano and allspice. If you contract food poisoning, natural antibiotics must be taken. Garlic and oil of oregano are both effective in treating food poisoning and don't lead to drug resistance the way man-made antibiotics do.

## **Diarrhea**

Diarrhea can be a serious health threat if not controlled. Pepto Bismol or Milk of Magnesia are still some of the best substances available. This is often enough to cure the diarrhea, or at least slow it down long enough to allow you to get further treatment. Remember to drink plenty of fluids when you have diarrhea.

Many trips to the doctor can be avoided by either practicing prevention or by using a few simple home remedies. Start putting together a home medical kit and continue learning about holistic medicine and prevention. Though there are times when a doctor is needed, there are many other times when we can treat ourselves and our families. Once the health care system is overburdened with millions of additional patients, home treatment will become increasingly important.

## **What About Bartering?**

As the economy has worsened, there has been more talk of bartering. Bartering always grows in popularity in tough times, and there's no doubt bartering will have a role in a post-

collapse situation.

Bartering isn't complex; it simply represents trading of goods and services where there is no common medium, such as money. You barter when you want or need something that someone else has. A lot of survivalists think that bartering is bad, because you should prepare to have everything you need and thus never be in a situation where you need to barter.

Well, that's simply nonsense. No single family, let alone an individual, can possibly prepare themselves for an indefinite period of survival and anticipate every need, let alone wants. By all means you should prepare as well as possible, but pretending that you're fully prepared is even worse, because then you're turning a blind eye to opportunities that will arise that you can capitalize on for the benefit of yourself and your loved ones.

Food and shelter are the most basic necessities, and thus they are at the top of any preparedness list. It also means that in an emergency, these will be the items most in demand, and therefore, the best items to barter with in terms of getting an advantageous exchange.

Bartering shelter is a risky proposition. Let's say you have lots of room and someone else needs it, but unless you know that person well and can gauge how they will act in a crisis, AND unless they have something that you want or need, bartering for shelter can be an extremely difficult proposition.

Bartering for food, on the other hand, is easy. Everyone needs it, and not everyone will have it. Just look at the crises around the world, be they man-made or natural. Getting food to survivors is always a top priority. It will be no different when the collapse happens here, and because so many Americans are woefully unprepared, there is going to be substantial demand. (Keep in mind how far most of us are from food sources and you can begin to imagine how severe the food crisis will be.)

Perhaps you have done a great job of stockpiling food and you have an excess, and you come across a family that is going without. It would be great to simply be charitable and give them food, and perhaps that's what the situation will warrant, but in survival situations you have to be extremely careful with charity. What happens when the food runs out? If the family has something to exchange-even their labor-then you should seek to find a just exchange of goods and services. (For example, an individual might benefit from having the combined work force that a strong young family can add to a retreat location or safe house, or even just in the garden).

Of course, if you have a survival garden, livestock or another replenishable source of food that exceeds your personal needs, then you're in a great situation because you have an

unending supply of tradeable goods that will be in demand. However, be discreet with this because anyone who is perceived as having surplus in a time of need could be a target for theft or worse.

On a related note, some Christian thinkers have taught that storing excess while others suffer is immoral. The idea of having years worth of food stored away in your garage while children and the elderly are starving at the front door does present a challenge. On the other hand, I'm reminded of the instruction Joseph received to prepare Egypt for the coming famine by storing up the bounty from the seven years of plenty. Remember that in Genesis people (including Joseph's family), came from all over to buy the grain that Egypt had so prudently stored up. I think we can conclude that there is nothing wrong with preparing for a coming disaster and even trading for goods with those that are in need. When it comes to charity, each person must decide what he is capable of doing.

Of course, you can trade all sorts of things. Many of your emergency supplies will be in demand, be those books, tools, communications equipment, medical gear, tools and basic supplies. Most of us are probably not making preparations to store things specifically with barter in mind, and very few of us will likely have enough of these items to last indefinitely anyway. However, I do know people who are now adding to their core survival stockpiles with luxury items, such as alcohol and tobacco, because of their barter value.

Finally, don't overlook the skills you have or could acquire as a source of bartering. The wonderful thing about bartering a skill is that once you have traded it for something else, you still have it! On the other hand, you can't store up your skills like you can a commodity. If you have a skill that will be useful in a survival or post-collapse situation, then give some consideration to how you might be able to employ that to help others and receive in exchange something you want or need. If you don't have a skill, perhaps you should work on developing one or more that will be valuable. If you've been working at a desk, pushing paper around all your life, now might be a good time to develop a hobby or interest that could prove valuable later on.

Of course, those with medical, agricultural, mechanical, carpentry and construction skills will be in great demand. It will serve you well to develop some skills in these areas, and possibly another area. For example, I recently visited a third world country where they are making permanent water filter systems out of locally available materials, principally rock, gravel and sand. These water filters can take the nastiest water from a creek or river and turn it into potable water, using materials found virtually anywhere in the world. When the city water stops flowing, knowing how to produce drinkable water will be an extremely valuable skill.