



October 27, 2019 (continued)

Sanitation and Hygiene

Dish Washing Considerations

I love washing dishes with hot running water and some dish soap! Yes, you read that right. I have washed dishes in a tiny sink with shampoo in Europe. I have scoured big pots with sand and boiled water to really wash them over a trench and a blow torch on the beach of the Red Sea (and I still got dysentery). I have been so high on Mt. Timpanogos that water wouldn't boil before it was mostly evaporated, and the sink was a hole we dug in the dirt and lined with a plastic garbage bag to hold water. I have washed dishes in cold soapy water and then poured boiling water from a tea pot over them to rinse. Truly, we have it good, and washing dishes in our current conditions is a happy thing.

The luxury of hot running water and nice bubbly dish soap could change at the blink of an eye. Then what? Until I read the Church's manual for third-world countries I didn't really think about how important it is to wash dishes properly to keep from getting sick. Cleaning dishes without treated hot water can be a challenge. Just getting the grime off is one part of washing dishes, but making sure they are truly clean and free of bacteria is just as important. You have three methods to choose from for this second disinfecting part.

1. If you have access to soap and hot water to wash and hot water to rinse you have it covered (as long as the water is boiled, disinfected, and free of contamination).

2. You can choose to wash the dishes so they look and feel clean and then dunk them in boiling water and let them air dry. (You should have dunk bags you can hang dry if this is your method.)
3. You can wash the dishes so they look and feel clean and then put them in a sanitizing solution for 3–10 minutes depending on the solution you are using. Then let them air dry.

* PS –Be sure to bury any food particles that are left over so you don't feed vermin. Meanwhile, just be thankful every time you have the opportunity to wash dishes with dish soap and hot running water.

Rodents

I have written these papers for several years for our ward. Every couple of years there has been one on rodents. If you have a rodent infestation it can present a crisis in itself. Once they start to multiply they do so rapidly. A mouse can produce a litter every 21 days, and those babies do the same. Extremely often, rodents and crises go hand in hand and the problems increase. Now is a good time to be conscious of building anti-rodent habits. Here are some things I recommend as anti-rodent preps:

- Store all food in rodent-proof containers rather than packages. Mylar pouches are good for storage if you have them in another container like a bucket. They are not rodent proof. This includes a package of pasta in your cupboard or pantry.
- Keep clutter picked up and clean to avoid giving them a nesting place.
- Keep counters and floors clean and avoid bits of food throughout the house.
- Check to see that any little holes or cracks where they might enter are sealed up around the outside of your house. A mouse can get through amazingly small holes. ¼" can admit a mouse. There is caulking or even foam that will seal these holes.
- Don't leave outside doors ajar, especially in the fall when the weather changes.

- Have traps and/or poison on hand in a place safe from children and pets.
- In a crisis avoid having garbage sitting around even in a bag outside your house.
- Keeping vegetation away from your foundation also helps.

Hygiene Kits

Every time I have been involved in humanitarian aid throughout my life, hygiene kits are ever present. They contain such basic necessities for health and well-being that I have been surprised how much it costs to put a good one of these together. While you may not need to prepare to leave your home if something happens, you should have a supply of some of these items. I will say from experience that these things need to be rotated. Liquids like shampoo are not long-term storage items. You also may not have time to pull all the things you use for daily hygiene together. Along with supplies that can be quickly grabbed to go I recommend a hygiene kit.

Here is a \$5.00 hygiene kit. It is the absolute “bare bones”.

- One plastic shoebox or other lidded container of similar size (This may double as a wash-basin)
- Good quality toothbrush (Save the one from the dentist or go to \$ store)
- 1 bar of soap (Choose one that can double as shampoo if absolutely necessary)
- 1 box of baking soda (Split this with another person and put in pill or other plastic bottle. This can double as toothpaste and deodorant in a pinch)
- Comb (or brush) and hair ties or bobby pins (You can buy a package of combs at \$ store and split hair ties and combs)

Start with this basic kit so that you have something. Add things as you can, like dental floss, toothpaste, shampoo, a brush and better hair accessories, nail clippers, deodorant, wash cloth and/or hand towel, lotion, razors, simple shower shoes (e.g., flip-flops), any other things that assist you and family members with your personal hygiene.

Disinfectant

Chlorine bleach is a good disinfectant. However, its shelf life is short. To keep it at top performance you should replace it every 3-4 months. It stands to reason that if conditions decline you would want to be able to disinfect things. Here is one simple way to do that with things that last longer.

Some bacteria are easily killed with acid while others die faster and better with alkaline. You can actually use an acid like regular vinegar and wash a surface or article with that. Wait several minutes and rinse. Then wash the surface with a base like a strong ammonia hydroxide, wait and rinse. This method will not kill all bacteria, but it will kill many of them. While baking soda is a good cleaner it is not a strong enough base to kill many bacteria. However washing soda in laundry (find it in a box in the laundry section) and then a vinegar rinse is a good way to kill bacteria enough to freshen your load.

*When storing liquids, especially cleaning supplies, be sure to have them in a plastic bin or tray with high sides. Then if they do happen to leak over time the leakage will be contained. Remember that ammonia and chlorine produce a poisonous gas when mixed, so do not store these together.