



Consumer Alert

Food Safety: Power Outages & Flooding

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides these food safety recommendations for those who lost power or suffered flooding in their homes due to hurricanes and tropical storms. Please follow this advice to avoid becoming ill from food involved in power outages or flooding. For additional information, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854).

If the Power is Off

- NEVER taste a food to determine its safety!
- DISCARD refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers and deli items after four hours without power.
- If the food in your freezer still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below, then the food is SAFE to cook and eat, or refreeze.
- If power has been out for more than 48 hours, do not eat the foods in your freezer.

If Flooding Has Occurred

- Drink only bottled water that has NOT come in contact with flood waters.
- Discard ALL food that came in contact with flood waters, including canned goods.
- Discard wooden cutting boards, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples and pacifiers.
- Thoroughly WASH all metal pans, ceramic dishes and metal utensils that came in contact with flood water with hot soapy water **and** SANITIZE by either (a) boiling them in clean water or (b) immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water.

***When in doubt,
throw it out!***

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854)
www.fsis.usda.gov

SAFETY ADVICE FOR FOODS AND UTENSILS AFFECTED BY FLOODING

THROW AWAY

Throw away **ALL** the following that came in contact with flood waters:

- **Canned Foods**
 - Store bought canned goods.
 - Home canned foods.
 - Preserves sealed with paraffin.
 - Opened and unopened jars with waxed cardboard seals such as mayonnaise and salad dressing.
- Foods in **cardboard boxes, paper, foil, cellophane and cloth.**
- Food in **canisters** such as spices, seasonings, extracts, flour, sugar, grain, coffee and other staples.
- **Meat, poultry, eggs and fish.**
- **Fruits and vegetables.**
- **Wooden** cutting boards
- **Plastic** utensils
- **Baby bottles, nipples and pacifiers.**

SAVE

- **Canned foods** that **did not** come in contact with flood waters.
- The following items that came in contact with flood waters can be **treated** by washing with hot soapy water **AND** sanitizing by either (a) boiling in clean water or (b) immersing for 15 minutes in a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water:
 - **Metal pans**
 - **Ceramic dishes**
 - **Metal utensils**