

Safe Food After Flooding

Floodwater can bring silt, raw sewage, oil and chemicals into your kitchen and contaminate stored food making it unsafe to eat. Consider these recommendations for keeping food safe after a flood.

Throw Away or Keep Foods

Contact with flood waters determines if food should be kept or thrown out. Consider the following:

Keep:

- Foods that have not come in contact with flood water.
- Foods that are in waterproof containers or did not come in contact with flood waters.
- Canned foods that are not damaged or swollen.

Throw Away:

- Raw and ready to eat food that may have come into contact with flood water, including raw fruits and vegetables.
- Food in non-waterproof containers that may have contacted flood water. Includes foods in cardboard or plastic wrap and/or with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops and crimped caps.
- Foods in cardboard boxes such as juice, milk, baby formula; as they can not be sanitized.
- Canned foods with damage such as: swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive rusting or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or easy opening.
- Home canned foods that have come in contact with flood water.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Packaged Food

Foods in waterproof food storage containers or commercially prepared jars, cans and retort pouches that have contacted flood waters can be kept if they are properly cleaned and sanitized. Follow these steps:

- Remove labels and clean off dirt or silt using a clean brush or wipe.
- Wash containers with soap and clean water.
- Rinse containers with clean water.

- Sanitize containers using one of the two methods.
- Re-label containers with a marker and include the expiration date.
- Foods in these cleaned and sanitized containers should be used as quickly as possible.

Sanitizing Methods

1. Make sanitizer solution by adding 1 cup (8 oz) of unscented household bleach to 5 gallons of water. Place containers in the solution for 15 minutes.
2. Bring a large pot water to boil and submerge containers for 2 minutes.