



Floods: Food Safety

Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. Discard any food without a waterproof container if there is any chance that it has come into contact with flood water. Undamaged, commercially canned foods can be saved if you remove the can labels, thoroughly wash the cans, and then disinfect them with a solution consisting of one cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water. Relabel your cans, including expiration date, with a marker. Food containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda pop bottles), twist caps, flip tops, and home canned foods should be discarded if they have come into contact with flood water because they cannot be disinfected. For infants, use **only** pre-prepared canned baby formula that requires no added water, rather than powdered formulas prepared with treated water.

Frozen and Refrigerated Foods

If your refrigerator or freezer may be without power for a long period:

- Divide your frozen foods among friends' freezers if they have electricity;
- Seek freezer space in a store, church, school, or commercial freezer that has electrical service; or
- Use dry ice -- 25 pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer below freezing for 3-4 days. (Exercise care when handling dry ice, because it freezes everything it touches. Wear dry, heavy gloves to avoid injury.)

Thawed food can usually be eaten or refrozen if it is still "refrigerator cold," or if it still contains ice crystals. To be safe, remember, "When in doubt, throw it out." Discard any food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.

Your refrigerator will keep foods cool for about 4 hours without power if it is unopened. Add block or dry ice to your refrigerator if the electricity will be off longer than 4 hours.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).

June 30, 2004

Page 1 of 1