



Food Safety After An Emergency

Identify and throw away contaminated food. In the event of a natural disaster or emergency incident, be sure to carefully inspect all food items and do not eat any food you think may be unsafe.

Remember that food contaminated with bacteria does not necessarily smell or appear spoiled. *When in doubt, throw it out.*

- Throw away canned foods that are bulging, opened, or damaged.
- Throw away food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- Never taste food to determine its safety.

If there has been a power outage:

- Throw away perishable foods (including meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 4 °C (40 °F) for 2 hours or more.
- Thawed food that contain ice crystals or are 4 °C (40 °F) or below can be refrozen or cooked.
- If raw food has leaked during thawing, clean and disinfect the areas the food has touched.
- A refrigerator with no power will keep food cool for four to six hours. Put ice, if available, in the refrigerator, an ice box, or cooler to help keep perishable foods temporarily chilled.

If there has been a natural disaster:

Because of the potential for hazardous contamination, the following foods should be destroyed if they have come in contact with flood water, snow and ice, chemicals, animal waste, and/or dirt:

fresh fruits and vegetables

foods in cardboard or paper cartons

foods in bags, such as rice and flour

- Food in glass or plastic jars and bottles may be unsafe, as hazardous materials can seep into the lids of these containers and contaminate the food.
- Food containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda pop bottles), twist caps, flip tops, snap-open, and home canned foods should be discarded if they have come into contact with floodwater because they cannot be properly disinfected.
- Sterilize any cans that have come in contact with floodwater or storm water. Before sterilizing, throw away labels. Be sure to re-label the cans once they have been cleaned.
- Only foods in hermetically sealed, airtight containers are safe, such as metal cans, juice boxes, and packages of freeze dried meals. However, these containers must be carefully cleaned and disinfected before use. Containers that are damaged are unsafe and should be thrown away.
- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice, or make baby formula.
- Clean and sanitize food-contact surfaces.

Tips for Sanitation

Clean and sanitize food and food-contact surfaces in a four-step process:

- Wash with soap and warm, clean water.
 - Rinse with clean water.
 - Prepare a bleach solution of 5 ml / 1 tsp of bleach per 750 ml / 3 cups of water
 - Sanitize by immersing or cleaning for 1 minute in a bleach solution
 - Allow to air dry.
- It is best to sanitize all food preparation equipment and surfaces, dishes and utensils with a mild bleach solution, followed by air drying. Do not put wet items one on top of the other, since bacteria may multiply in trapped water.
 - Do not use wash cloths until they have been cleaned and disinfected with a bleach solution.
 - Discard wooden cutting boards, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers. These items cannot be properly sanitized if they have come into contact with contaminated water.

Feeding Infants and Young Children

- Breastfed infants should continue to be breastfed. Mothers should be sure to wash their hands frequently.
- For formula-fed infants, use ready-to-feed formula if possible. If using ready-to-feed formula is not possible, it is best to use bottled water to prepare powdered or concentrated formula. If bottled water is not available, use boiled water. Use treated water to prepare formula only if you do not have bottled or boiled water.
- If you prepare formula with boiled water, let the formula cool sufficiently before giving it to an infant.
- Clean feeding bottles and nipples with bottled, boiled, or treated water before each use.
- Wash your hands before preparing formula and before feeding an infant. You can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer for washing your hands if the water supply is limited.

To learn more about emergency preparedness, visit the Public Safety Canada website at www.getprepared.ca or call 1 800 O-CANADA (1-800-622-6232).

Canadian Food Inspection Agency website at www.inspection.gc.ca or call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232)