

Green Lake County Health Department

KEEP FOOD AND WATER SAFE AFTER A FLOOD

Food, medicines and cosmetics

Discard food, medicines, and cosmetics that were not in water tight containers and that were exposed to flood waters.

Canned food in glass jars

Discard if completely submerged. If merely splashed, make sure seal is tight, wash off and disinfect by immersing in a solution of 3 tablespoons of liquid household bleach (such as Clorox or Purex) to a gallon of water.

- Canned foods are generally safe to eat. Disinfect as explained above.
- Jams, jellies, and so on – discard if sealed under paraffin.

Frozen Foods

Discard if thawed to above 41 degree Fahrenheit or contaminated.

Fruits and vegetables

Wash and cook thoroughly before eating.

Discard loose-skinned fresh fruits and vegetables such as lettuce that have been exposed to flood waters.

Refrigerated foods

Discard all milk, fish, meat, poultry, and eggs, if refrigeration has been off and the temperature is greater than 41 degree Fahrenheit.

WARNING: When in doubt, throw it out!!!

Cleaning and disinfecting the refrigerator and the freezer

- Thoroughly clean the interior and exterior of refrigerators and freezers with soap and clean water. Disinfect inside surfaces with a solution of 3/4 cup liquid household, chlorine bleach to one gallon of warm water.
- If odor persists, place about 3 ounces of activated charcoal (available in drugstores) in an open container in the refrigerator or freezer. Food may remain with the charcoal. After 3 to 6 hours, put the charcoal in moderate oven to drive off the odor and to “reactivate” it. Repeat these steps as necessary. Save the charcoal -you can reuse it.

Food

Food may not be safe to eat during and after an emergency. Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, broiled, or treated water.

Identify and throw away food that may not be safe to eat.

- Throw away food that may have come in contact with flood or storm water.
- Throw away food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture
- Throw away perishable foods (including meat, poultry, fish and eggs and leftovers) that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 2 hours or more.
- Thawed food that contains ice crystals or is 40 degrees F or below can be refrozen or cooked.
- Throw away canned foods that are bulging, opened or damaged.
- 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 disinfected
- If cans have come in contact with floodwater of storm water, remove the labels, wash the cans, and dip them in a solution of 1 cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water. Re-label the cans with a marker. Include the expiration date.
- 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

CDC recommends discarding wooden cutting boards, baby nipples, and pacifiers. These items cannot be properly sanitized if they have come into contact with contaminated flood waters. Clean and sanitize food-contact surfaces in a four-step process.

1. Wash with soap and warm, clean water.
2. Rinse with clean water
3. Sanitize by immersing for 1 minute in a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach (5.25%, unscented) per gallon of clean water.
4. Allow to air dry