

Food and Water Safety AFTER the Storm

Here are some tips from the American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Food and Accessories

- Shelf-stable foods such as canned goods can be eaten cold or heated on the grill.
- A digital thermometer is a necessity in your kitchen. With thermometers, you can quickly check the internal temperatures of food for doneness and safety.
- Discard food that may have come into contact with contaminated floodwater.
- Undamaged, commercially canned foods can be saved if you remove the labels, wash the cans, then disinfect them with a solution of one cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water.
- Food containers with screw caps, snap lids, crimped caps, twist caps, flip tops, snap tops and home-canned foods should be discarded if they have come into contact with floodwater.
- For infants, use only canned baby formula.
- Buy paper plates, cups and plastic utensils. Antibacterial hand sanitizer will be helpful.
- A gas grill can be your most versatile tool. Not only can you use it to prepare food, but you can also use it to boil water.

Water Safety

- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, or make ice.
- Drink only bottled, boiled or treated water until your supply is tested and found safe.
- Boiling water kills harmful bacteria and parasites. Bring water to a boil for one minute.
- Water may be treated with chlorine or iodine tablets or by mixing six drops (1/8 teaspoon) of unscented, chlorine bleach (5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite) per gallon of water. Mix the solution thoroughly, and let stand for about 30 minutes. **This treatment will NOT kill parasitic organisms.**

Frozen and Refrigerated Foods

- An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold enough for at least a couple of hours. A freezer that is half-full will hold for up to 24 hours, and a full freezer for 48 hours.
- Have enough coolers to store the food you want to save.
- If you think you will be without power for a long period, ask friends with electricity to store your frozen foods.
- Use dry ice, if available. Twenty-five pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer below freezing for up to four days. Wear dry, heavy gloves to avoid injury from dry ice.
- Discard food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more.
- If a power outage is two hours or less, you need not be concerned.

Source: Media General News Service