

**SOLUTIONS**  
*for your LIFE*

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## Safe Food Handling After a Storm



After we've survived the big winds, what can we keep, what should we discard? Here's a run-down of food safety tips for things that have been under water or

### **exposed to dirty or contaminated water:**

**Keep and sanitize foods in unopened metal containers.** If they have been under water or touched by water, sanitize them before you open them. Remove the labels and wash the containers in strong detergent. They must be boiled for 10 minutes or soaked in bleach water before you open them. If you have bleach that is 5% chlorine (it should say

on the label what strength it is), add 3/4 teaspoon of bleach to a quart of water. If the bleach is only 2%, use 2 tsp in a quart of water. Soak the cans or jars for

15 minutes, then let them air-dry before you open them. If you are sanitizing a lot of cans at once, be sure to write the contents on each can with an indelible marker.

Foods and drinks in undamaged flexible pouches can be boiled for 2 minutes or soaked



**For Foods that Have Been Touched by Storm Waters: DO NOT KEEP** preserves that were sealed with paraffin, home canned foods or jars such as mayonnaise that have waxed cardboard under the lid. Nothing that is in paper, cardboard or foil packages should be kept. Fresh meats, fish, eggs, milk and produce should not be kept. Opened containers of foods should not be kept. Dry things such as flour or sugar in canisters should not be kept. If cans are dented or rusted, they should be discarded. Cans that are leaking or bulging should be buried, so that pets can not get at them.

in bleach water to sanitize before opening. Jars or containers with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops or crimped caps must be discarded.

**Wash and sanitize pots, plates, glasses, and dishes** in the same manner as cans. Wooden and plastic utensils, including baby bottles and pacifiers can not be sanitized and **must be discarded.**

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**If the power goes off**, then comes back on, here are guidelines for what is in the freezer.

**This assumes that the food was not under**

**water or touched by water!**

**Meat, fish, poultry:** If it still has ice crystals in it, if it feels crunchy on the inside, you can safely refreeze it. If it still as cold as a refrigerator, you can cook it now, then eat it or refreeze it. If it is completely thawed and only barely cool, or warm, throw it away.

**Vegetables and fruits:** If it still has ice crystals in it, it feels crunchy on the inside, you can safely refreeze it. If it still as cold as a refrigerator, you can cook it now, then eat it or refreeze it. If it is completely thawed and only barely cool, or warm, throw it away.

**Frozen dinners, pizzas**, left-overs, casseroles, soups, stews, cookie dough: If these thaw but are still cold, they can be cooked and eaten immediately. Custard pies and pies containing eggs or milk should be discarded. Once any of these are warm, they should be discarded immediately.

**Baked goods, breads**, cakes, etc., and nuts: If these products were not touched by water, and no juices from other melting foods dripped on them, they will be safe. If they show any signs of water damage or mold, throw them away.

**Milk:** Frozen milk that has thawed completely and gotten warm should be discarded. If it is still cold it may be used immediately.

**Cheese, butter:** If it is still cold it can be used or refrozen.

The following refrigerated foods will **keep safely for a several days** at room temperature. But, if they have been touched by contaminated water, show mold, or have any unusual color or odor, discard them.

Butter and margarine

Fresh fruits and vegetables

Dried fruits, nuts, coconut

Cheeses, hard and processed

Opened jars of salad dressing,

mayonnaise, peanut butter, jelly and jam, relish, pickles and olives, taco, soy and barbeque sauces, mustard, ketchup

Fruit juice, fruit pies

Fresh herbs, onions, spices, etc.

Breads, cakes, rolls, muffins without

fillings

If these foods are **warmer than refrigerator temperature for more than 2 hours**, throw them out:



Raw or cooked meats, poultry, seafood, and dishes containing them;

Milk, cream, soft cheeses;

Cooked rice, pasta, pasta salads;

Custard, chiffon, cheese pies or pastries containing these fillings;

Eggs, egg substitutes;

Lunch meats, hot dogs, pizza with meat;

Casseroles, soups, stews;

Refrigerated bread and cookie doughs.

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