



Disaster Recovery

LSU
AgCenter
Research & Extension

Food Safety: Power Outages & Flooding

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides these food safety recommendations for those who lost power or suffered flooding in their homes due to a hurricane. Please follow this advice to avoid becoming ill from food involved in power outages or flooding.

If the Power is Off

- NEVER taste a food to determine its safety!
- DISCARD refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers and deli items after four hours without power.
- If the food in your freezer still contains ice crystals or is at 40° F or below, then the food is SAFE to cook and eat, or refreeze.
- If power has been out for more than 48 hours, do not eat the foods in your freezer.

If Flooding Has Occurred

- Discard ALL food that came in contact with flood waters, including canned goods.
- Drink only bottled water that has NOT come in contact with flood waters. Discard wooden cutting boards, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples and pacifiers.
- Thoroughly WASH all metal pans, ceramic dishes and metal utensils that came in contact with flood water with hot soapy water and SANITIZE by boiling them in clean water or by immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water.

When in doubt, throw it out!

SAFETY ADVICE FOR FOODS AND UTENSILS AFFECTED BY FLOODING

THROW AWAY:

All Canned Foods!

- Store bought canned goods.
- Home canned foods.
- Preserves sealed with paraffin.
- Opened and unopened jars with waxed cardboard seals such as mayonnaise and salad dressing.

All foods in:

- Cardboard boxes, paper, foil, cellophane, or cloth.

All spices, seasonings, extracts, flour, sugar, grain, coffee and other staples in canisters.

All meat, poultry, eggs or fish.

- Fruits and vegetables
- Wooden cutting boards
- Plastic utensils
- Baby bottle nipples and pacifiers.

SAVE:

Canned foods that did not come into contact with flood waters.

- Metal pans
- Ceramic dishes
- Metal utensils

(Wash with hot soapy water and sanitizing by sanitizing by boiling in clean water or by immersing for 15 minutes in a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water).

For additional information, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854).

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment