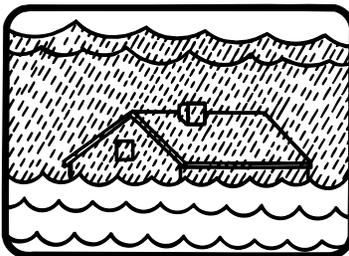




## Meal Preparation and Food Safety During and After a Flood

Prepared by MSU Extension Food Safety Area of Expertise Team; edited by Joyce McGarry, MSU Extension

If you live in an area subject to floods, be ready to raise refrigerators or freezers by putting cement blocks under their corners. If you keep canned goods and other foods in a basement or low cabinets, move them to a higher location. Flood waters may carry silt, raw sewage, oil or chemical waste.



- Flour, sugar, grain, coffee and other staples in canisters.
- Cans dented, leaking, bulging or rusted.
- Wooden spoons, plastic utensils and baby bottle nipples and pacifiers.
- Discard medicines and cosmetics that were not in watertight containers and that were exposed to flood waters.

### Emergency supplies

- Food and water for 4 to 5 days.
- Hand can opener.
- Battery-powered radio.
- Extra batteries.
- Camp stove or other emergency cooking equipment.
- Flashlights, candles, matches, kerosene lamp, fire extinguisher and first-aid kit.

### Flooded foods and other items to be discarded

- Meat, poultry, fish and eggs.
- Fresh produce.
- Liquids or beverages in crown-capped bottles or containers with pull-tops, corks or screw caps.
- Unopened jars with waxed cardboard seals such as mayonnaise and salad dressing.
- All foods in cardboard boxes, paper, foil, cellophane or cloth.
- Spices, seasonings and extracts.
- Home-canned foods.
- Opened containers and packages.

### Items to be saved

- Undamaged canned goods and commercial glass jars of food. These items are safe if you sanitize the containers. Mark contents on can or jar lid with indelible ink, then remove labels, paper can harbor dangerous bacteria. Then wash jars and cans in a strong detergent solution with a scrub brush. Finally, immerse containers for 15 minutes in a solution of 2 teaspoons of chlorine bleach per quart of room temperature water. Air dry before opening. Or you can sanitize dishes, glassware, metal pans and utensils by putting them in boiling water for 10 minutes.

### Water

Drink only approved or chlorinated water. Consider all water from wells, cisterns and other delivery systems in the disaster area unsafe until tested. Purchase bottled water, if necessary, until you are certain that your water supply is safe. Keep a 3-day supply of water or a minimum of 3 gallons of water per person.

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**For more information about safe food handling  
and preparation:**

FDA's Food Information Hotline  
1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366)

USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline  
1-800-535-4555

FDA's Food Information and Seafood Hotline  
1-800-332-4010

United States Food Safety Web Site  
[www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

The Food Domain. Michigan State University  
[www.fooddomain.msu.edu](http://www.fooddomain.msu.edu)

Extension Disaster Education Network  
[www.eden.lsu.edu](http://www.eden.lsu.edu)

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)



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