

## DISASTER QUICK TIPS: Basic Food Safety

### Do not eat unsafe food

Food is usually safe unless it touched floodwater or was not kept cold. Throw out food or drink if:

- It is likely to spoil;
- Has an odd odor, color, or feel;
- It touched floodwater and is not in a waterproof package;
- It has a screw cap or “pop top”
- Its can is rusted, swollen, leaking or badly creased or dented.

Cans that aren't damaged may be saved. First:

- Take label off;
- Wash with soap and clean water;
- Sanitize with a mix of **one tablespoon** bleach in **one gallon** of safe water;
- Write the product name and expiration date on the can.

When in doubt, throw it out!

### Keep cold foods cold

Throw out refrigerated or frozen food if it has been:

- Above 41° F for 4 hours or more; or
- Thawed for 2 hours or more.

*Note: MDH has detailed fact sheets on these topics. See page 2.*

If you lose power, a refrigerator will keep food cool for 4-6 hours if you keep it closed. Food will stay frozen for one day in a freezer that is half-full and kept closed; or up to 2 days if it is full.

### Use safe water

Only use safe water for drinking, cooking, making ice or baby formula, washing hands and dishes. If your water well has been flooded, water is most likely not safe.

### Clean hands and surfaces

Clean all hard surfaces such as countertops, sinks, dishes, utensils and other items that hold food.

Do all five steps to clean surfaces:

1. Use soap and warm, safe water;
2. Rinse with safe water;
3. Soak 1 minute with a mix of 1 Tablespoon household bleach per gallon of safe water;
4. Wipe countertops and soak dishes and utensils with this bleach mix;
5. Allow to air dry.

**Before touching food, wash hands well. Scrub hands with soap and safe water.**



Environmental Health Division  
P.O. Box 64975  
625 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

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**MDH Environmental Health Flood Information**

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/floods](http://www.health.state.mn.us/floods)

**MDH District Offices**

Bemidji	218-308-2100
Duluth	218-302-6166
Fergus Falls	218-332-5150
Mankato	507-344-2700
Marshall	507-537-7151
Metro	651-201-4500
Rochester	507-206-2700
St. Cloud	320-223-7300

**MDH Environmental Health Contacts**

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/contacts](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/contacts)

**Asbestos**

Asbestos and Lead Compliance: 651-201-4620

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/asbestos](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/asbestos)

**Carbon Monoxide and Mold**

MDH Indoor Air Quality: 651-201-4601 or 800-798-9050

E-mail: [health.indoorair@state.mn.us](mailto:health.indoorair@state.mn.us)

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/air](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/air)

**Cleaning-up and Food Safety**

MDH Food, Pools, and Lodging: 651-201-4500

E-mail: [health.foodlodging@state.mn.us](mailto:health.foodlodging@state.mn.us)

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety](http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety)

**Public Drinking Water**

MDH Drinking Water Protection: 651-201-4700

E-mail: [health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us](mailto:health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us)

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/water](http://www.health.state.mn.us/water)

**Wells and Well Water**

MDH Well Management: 651-201-4600 or 800-383-9808

E-mail: [health.wells@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wells@state.mn.us)

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells)

**If you require this document in another format such as large print, Braille, or cassette tape, contact 651-201-5000 or 800-657-3908. For deaf or hard of hearing TTY: 651-201-5797**