



Clark County Public Health *Fact Sheet*

HANDLING FLOOD-DAMAGED FOOD

Flood waters may carry contaminants such as silt, raw sewage, or chemical waste. Bacteria in the water can also contaminate any food it touches. Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container if there is any chance it has come into contact with flood water.

WHAT SHOULD I DISCARD?

- Meat, poultry, fish and eggs.
- Fresh produce.
- Preserves sealed with paraffin and any home canned foods.
- Food containers that are not waterproof including screw cap, snap lids, pull tops and crimped caps.
- Cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes – these cannot be cleaned.
- All food in cardboard boxes, paper, foil, cellophane or cloth.
- Spices, seasonings, and extracts.
- Flour, sugar, grain, coffee and other staples in canisters.
- Any cans that are dented, leaking, swollen, punctured, bulging, rusted, or crushed. Any can that is damaged in such a way to prevent opening with a wheel-type can opener.
- Wooden spoons, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples, and pacifiers.

WHAT CAN BE SAVED?

All metal canned food supply that is not damaged as listed above.

TO SANITIZE CANNED FOOD:

- Remove any paper label – labels can harbor dangerous bacteria.
- Mark contents with an indelible ink marker.
- Thoroughly wash cans with soap and water; use hot water if available. Remove all dirt and silt.
- Rinse cans in safe drinking water. Any residual soap will reduce the effectiveness of the chlorine sanitation.
- Immerse cans for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of drinking water (or previously boiled water).
- Air dry cans for at least 1 hour before opening or restacking.

TO SANITIZE DISHES, UTENSILS, CAN OPENER, PANS, AND GLASSWARE:

- Wash with soap and water, use hot water if available. Remove all dirt and silt.
- Rinse in safe drinking water. Any residual soap will reduce the effectiveness of the chlorine sanitation.
- Immerse for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of drinking water (or previously boiled water).
- Air dry.

For more information contact: Clark County Environmental Public Health, (360) 397-8428
www.clark.wa.gov

Websites with emergency tips: American Red Cross, www.redcross.org
SDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, www.fsis.usda.gov