

Food Safety after a Flood

Precautions should be taken after a flood or when food comes into contact with flood waters. It is hard to make food safe to eat once it has been exposed to flood waters that are heavily contaminated. Washing, sanitizing and properly cooking food may not be enough to destroy dangerous bacteria and chemical contaminants.

General Precautions:

- Wash your hands often if you have been cleaning up after a flood, especially before handling or eating food.
- Wash with warm soapy water and then sanitize all contaminated utensils, dishes and food contact surfaces, such as drawers, shelves, cutting boards and countertops. A simple sanitizing solution can be made by mixing 30 ml of regular household bleach per 4.5 litres of water (about 1 oz. bleach per gallon of water).

Packaged Foods	Unpackaged & Fresh Foods
<p>If exposed to flood waters, destroy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foods packaged in containers that are <u>not</u> waterproof, • Bottled drinks and home preserves, which may be difficult to clean & sanitize under caps, lids or sealing rings, • Canned goods that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appear to have a broken seal ○ Show signs of bloating or seepage • Any previously-opened packaged foods. <p>Commercially-canned foods in good condition may be salvaged by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removing the label, 2. Washing the can in warm soapy water and then rinsing, 3. Sanitizing in a solution of 40 mL of regular household bleach in 1 litre of water (approx. 5 ounces or 10 tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water), and 4. Marking the contents on the food container if it will not be used right away. 	<p>Discard food that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unpackaged and was exposed to flood waters, including fresh fruit & vegetables, • Was <u>not</u> temperature controlled (warmer than 4°C for more than 2 hours), whether or not it was exposed to flood water, • Is considered higher-risk, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cooked grains ○ Cooked vegetables ○ Dairy products ○ Eggs ○ Meat & poultry ○ Seafood

For further information, please visit www.interiorhealth.ca >Your Environment.