

## **Floodwater and Food: When in Doubt, Throw It Out**

Residents facing the daunting task of cleaning up flooded homes and wondering whether high water or power outages have ruined their food can follow a simple rule: When in doubt, throw it out.

Once power is off, the refrigerator keeps food at safely cold temperatures for 4 hours, while food in a freezer remains safe for approximately 8 hours. If your power is off longer, your food is not safe to eat and should be discarded.

Do not consume anything that flood water may have touched. Flood water carries disease-causing organisms.

- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. **If in doubt, throw it out.**
- Do not eat food packed in plastic, paper, cardboard, cloth, and similar containers that have been water damaged.
- Discard food and beverage containers with screw-caps, snap lids, crimped caps (soda bottles), twist caps, flip tops, and home canned foods, if they have come in contact with flood water. These containers cannot be disinfected.
- Undamaged, commercially-prepared foods in all-metal cans or retort pouches can be saved if you remove the labels, thoroughly wash the cans, rinse them, and then disinfect them with a sanitizing solution consisting of 1 tablespoon of bleach per gallon of potable water. Finally, re-label containers that had the labels removed, including the expiration date, with a marker. Discard any canned foods that are dented as this can increase the risk of contracting botulism, a rare but very serious illness.

For more information, please go to [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).



Serving Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn,  
Liberty, Long, and McIntosh counties.