

# Food Safety After Flooding

## *What You Need to Know*

### How can I keep my food safe after a flood?

- Discard and do not eat any food that may have come in contact with floodwater.
- Discard food that is not in a waterproof container.
- Non-waterproof food containers include those with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops, and crimped caps.
- Discard cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes and home canned. These items cannot be safely cleaned and sanitized.
- Inspect canned foods and discard any that are damaged. Can damage is shown by swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, deep rusting, or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener.

### How can I save undamaged, commercially-prepared foods in all-metal cans and shelf-stable pouches?

Follow this procedure:

- Remove the labels if able.
- Brush or wipe away any dirt, mud, or residue.
- Thoroughly wash with soap and hot water, if available. Rinse with water that is safe for drinking, if available, since dirt or soap reduces chlorine sanitation effectiveness.
- Sanitize cans and pouches in one of the following ways:
  - Place in water. Allow the water to come to a boil and continue boiling for two minutes, or place in a freshly made solution of one tablespoon of unscented liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water (or the cleanest, clearest water available) for fifteen minutes.
  - Air dry cans/pouches for a minimum of one hour before opening or storing.
  - Re-label cans or pouches, if removed. Include the expiration date if available.
  - Use this food as soon as possible.
  - Dilute concentrated baby formula with clean drinking water in reconditioned containers.
- Thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes, and utensils (including can openers) with soap and hot water, if available. Rinse, then sanitize by boiling in clean water for two minutes or immerse them for fifteen minutes in a solution of one tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water (or the cleanest, clearest water available).
- Thoroughly wash counter tops with soap and hot water, if available. Rinse, then sanitize by applying a solution of one tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water (or the cleanest, clearest water available). Allow to air dry.