



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

## \* \* \* Fact Sheet \* \* \*

# Food Safety Tips – After the Storm

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Food Control recommends the following food safety tips for residents that lost power and experienced flooding:

- Discard all perishable foods that have been and without refrigeration and have had a temperature of 40° Fahrenheit and above for two hours or more:
  - This includes:
    - Meats;
    - Milk;
    - Yogurt;
    - Eggs;
    - Mayonnaise and dressings;
    - Pastas; and
    - Desserts.
  - Food items that can be kept for a **limited time** without refrigeration include:
    - Hard process cheeses such as Cheddar, Swiss, Provolone Romano and Parmesan;
    - Butter and margarine;
    - Opened canned fruits and fruit juices;
    - Peanut butter, jellies, jams;
    - Mustard and vinegar based dressings;
    - Bread products like rolls, muffins, bagels, waffles; and
    - Herbs, spices and raw vegetables.
- Discard all foods that come in contact with flood waters **including canned goods**;
- Thoroughly wash all kitchen utensils, pots, plates, etc., after contact with flood water with hot soapy water;
  - Sanitize them by boiling in clean water or immersing them in a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water for 15 minutes.
- Place all discarded spoiled foods in double plastic bags closed with ties;
  - Put them in animal and bird proof trash cans.

- Keep foods that have been stored in an unopened, well functioning freezer based on the following criteria:
  - A half full unopened freezer will keep foods safely for up to 24 hours;
  - A fully stocked unopened freezer can keep foods safely for 48 hours.
  
- Refreeze foods *only if* the items still contain ice crystals and feel cold and hard to the touch – this includes:
  - Meats;
  - Seafood products;
  - Juices;
  - Casseroles;
  - Egg products;
  - Cheeses;
  - Vegetables;
  - Pastries; and
  - Frozen meals.
  
- Use common sense when dealing with possible food spoilage:
  - Do not taste foods to see if they are spoiled
  - **If in doubt throw it out.**

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Toll Free 1-877-4MD-DHMH – TTY/Maryland Relay Service 1-800-735-2258

Web Site: [www.dhmh.maryland.gov](http://www.dhmh.maryland.gov)