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Food Safety Tips – After the Storm

The Maryland 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 without refrigeration and have remained at 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 with hot, soapy water after contact with flood water. This includes pots, plates, etc.,
 - 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.

- More -

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- 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.**

For more information, go to the DHMH website: <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/>

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