

When in Doubt, Throw it Out!

Food: Throw away food that may have come in contact with flood or storm water; perishable foods that have not been refrigerated properly due to power outages; and those with an unusual odor, color or texture. Unsafe food can make you sick *even* if it looks, smells and tastes normal. When in doubt, throw it out.

Water: Do not use water you suspect or have been told is contaminated to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make ice or make baby formula. Safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled or treated water. Your state, local or tribal health department can make specific recommendations for boiling or treating water in your area.

If Flooding Occurs, Keep Water Safe

Follow these steps to keep your water safe during and after flood conditions.

1. Only use water from a safe source for drinking and washing or preparing food.
2. Use bottled water that has not been exposed to flood waters, if it is available.
3. If you do not have bottled water, you should boil or disinfect water to make it safe.
4. If you have a well that has been flooded, the water should be tested and disinfected after flood waters recede. If you suspect that your well may be contaminated, contact your local or state health department or agricultural extension agent for specific advice.

How to Boil or Disinfect Water to Make it Safe

If the water is cloudy, first filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle, and then draw off the clear water for boiling/disinfecting. Then, follow one of these two procedures:

Boiling

Boiling water will kill most types of disease-causing organisms that may be present.

1. Boil the water for 1 minute.
2. Let it cool, and store it in clean containers with covers.

Disinfecting with Bleach

Bleach will kill some, but not all, types of disease-causing organisms that may be in the water.

- Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops) of unscented household liquid bleach (5.25% concentration) for each gallon of water.
- Stir it well and let it stand for 30 minutes before you use it.
- Store disinfected water in clean containers with covers.

Questions?

Contact your local inspector or call the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) at 402-471-3422. Additional information can be found on the NDA website at nda.nebraska.gov/fscp/foods.