

Some Tips for Water Safety

The following tips are from the FDA website for water safety during hurricanes and floods.

- Hurricanes, especially if accompanied by a tidal surge or flooding, can contaminate the public water supply. Drinking contaminated water may cause illness. You cannot assume that the water in the hurricane-affected area is safe to drink. Listen to local announcements for updated information on the safety of the water supply.
- If bottled water is not available and the safety of tap water is questionable, follow these directions to purify it:
- If you have a heat source available, boil the water vigorously for 1-3 minutes (at altitudes above one mile, boil for 3 minutes). Water should be bubbling and rolling. (www.cdc.gov)
- If you can't boil water, add 8 drops (about 1/8 teaspoon or 0.75 ml) of newly purchased, unscented liquid household bleach per gallon of water, stir it well and let the water stand for 30 minutes before you use it. Note that using bleach will not kill parasitic organisms. (www.epa.gov/OGWDW/faq/emerg.html).
- You can also use water-purifying tablets from your local pharmacy or sporting goods store. (www.cdc.gov).
- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. Discard any food without a waterproof container if there is any chance that it has come into contact with floodwater. Undamaged, commercially canned foods can be saved if you remove the labels, thoroughly wash the cans and disinfect them with a solution consisting of 1/4 cup of bleach per gallon of water for clean surfaces. Re-label your cans, including the expiration date, with a marker. Food containers with screw-caps, snap lids, and home canned foods should be discarded if they have come in contact with flood water because they cannot be disinfected.
- Discard wooden cutting boards, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples and pacifiers. There is no way to safely clean them if they have come in contact with contaminated flood waters. Thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes and utensils with soap and hot water. They should then be sanitized by boiling in clean water or immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of 1/4 cup of chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

During the Y2K crisis, we stored water and food. I recommend storing more than three days of food and water. In fact, if you stored 200 gallons of water in storage tanks, you would have enough water for almost a month for two people based on 3 gallons per person per day.

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Promoting awareness through the written word

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