

Be Prepared At All Times



Breastfeeding is Best for Babies— Especially During a Disaster

Breastfeeding is recommended and safe at all times, and especially during emergencies such as hurricanes or other disasters. Breastfeeding is sanitary with no need for refrigeration, sanitized bottles, or water for formula preparation. Breastfeeding helps reduce stress and is a comfort to both the mother and baby. Bottle fed babies are always at higher risk of diarrhea, and even more so during a power failure. The more often a woman breastfeeds, the more milk she will make. If you are already breastfeeding, continue for the baby's first year of life or longer as you desire.

Feeding with Infant Formula

Infant formula should be prepared using the directions on the formula label and as instructed by the baby's health care provider. All baby bottles and nipples must be cleaned before each use. If this is not possible, then **single-serve, ready-to-feed** bottles of formula must be used with a new or cleaned nipple.

Ready-to-feed formula does not need mixing and water should not be added to it. When using **ready-to-feed formula**, pour needed amount of formula for one feeding into a clean bottle. After the feeding, throw away any formula left in the bottle. Unused formula left in the original container must be refrigerated and used within 24 hours or as specified on the formula label.

If using ready-to-feed formula is not possible, it is best to use bottled water to prepare **powdered or concentrated formula**. If bottled water is not available, use boiled water. Use treated water to prepare formula only if you do not have bottled or boiled water. If you prepare formula with boiled water, let the water cool sufficiently before mixing it with the formula.

Clean feeding bottles and nipples with bottled, boiled, or treated water before each use. Wash your hands before preparing formula and before feeding an infant. You can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer for washing your hands if the water supply is limited.

Once formula is mixed, it must be refrigerated and used within 24 hours or as written on the formula label. If refrigeration is not available, mix formula each time baby is ready to eat and then throw away any formula left in the bottle after the feeding.



Florida Department of Health, WIC Program

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Tips for Water & Food

- Purchased bottled water that has been sealed is best for storage. If for any reason you must disinfect water, use unscented chlorine bleach in the ratio of 8 drops per gallon, and let the mixture sit 30 minutes before use.
- Choose compact, lightweight foods that do not require refrigeration, cooking or preparation, and foods that use little or no water.
- If you must heat food or water, use small propane bottles, with a screw-on cook top and stable base. In addition, keep gas tanks on gas grills, camping stoves, and propane cookers full. As a last resort, you can use cans of chafing fuel such as Sterno. Since refrigeration may not be available or very limited, only cook enough food to consume in one meal.
- Hand washing with soap and water is extremely important. However, in the event water for hand washing is unavailable, use alcohol-based sanitizer.

Food & Water To Have On Hand

Have enough water and food to feed your family for at least 3 days. Buy foods that do not need to be stored in the refrigerator and foods you and your family normally eat, plus favorite treats. Avoid salty foods because they will make you thirsty. Here are some food items to keep in your home to be used during a disaster or to take with you to a shelter if you must evacuate:

- 1 gallon of bottled water per person per day
- Ready-to-eat meats, chicken, or fish (in cans or pouches)
- Canned fruit, vegetables, and beans
- Peanut butter for those 2 years and older
- Ready-to-eat cereals, cereal bars, crackers
- Evaporated, powdered, or UHT boxed milk
- Canned, bottled, or boxed juice
- Nuts and dried fruit mixes for those 4 years and older
- Jars of baby food to last for 2 weeks
- Powdered and ready-to-feed baby formula, if you are not breastfeeding

Other Items To Have On Hand

- Disposable plates, cups, and eating utensils
- Plastic bags
- Packaged hand wipes, hand sanitizer, unscented bleach
- 1-2 manual can openers
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery powered radio and extra batteries
- Method for outdoor cooking and matches
- Extra supply of disposable diapers
- Appliance thermometers for freezers, refrigerators, and coolers

Refrigerated and Frozen Food During a Power Outage

If you are under a hurricane warning:

- Turn your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings.
- Fill plastic containers with water and put them into any empty spaces in your refrigerator and freezer. This chilled or frozen water will help keep food cold if the power goes out.
- Put a few ice cubes into a sealed plastic bag and place it in your freezer(s). If you have to evacuate, this plastic bag will help you see if your power was out and the items in your freezer had defrosted. When you return home, if the ice in the plastic bag is in one large clump or melted, this shows that the power was out long enough to allow your freezer to defrost and all foods within it should be thrown out even if they are frozen upon your return.

If you are at home during a power outage:

- Place an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator to make sure the inside of the refrigerator stays at 40°F or lower and only open the refrigerator and freezer when absolutely necessary and close the door quickly. Keep commonly used items such as drinks and snacks in a cooler so you can avoid opening the refrigerator. Place an appliance thermometer in your cooler to insure that it stays at 40°F or lower.
- First, eat fresh foods and foods from the refrigerator.
- Second, use foods from the freezer.
- Third, use canned goods and other staples that do not need refrigeration.



How long will frozen and refrigerated foods be safe after the power goes off?

Frozen foods: If an appliance thermometer stored in the freezer reads 40°F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen. If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine the safety. If the food contains ice crystals, it is safe to refreeze the food.

Refrigerated foods: Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power is out for no more than 4 hours. Discard any foods that can spoil such as milk, soft cheese, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers that have been above 40°F for 2 or more hours. Foods that can be refrigerated or refrozen safely after being held above 40°F for more than 2 hours include hard cheeses, butter or margarine, peanut butter, jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives, pickles, opened vinegar-based dressings, bread, rolls, cakes without icing, muffins, quick breads, tortillas, and bagels.

Floods

Throw out all food that came in contact with flood water, **including canned goods**. Also throw out wooden cutting boards, plastic utensils, baby bottles and nipples that came in contact with flood water. Thoroughly wash all metal pans, ceramic dishes, and utensils that came in contact with flood water with hot soapy water and sanitize by boiling them in clean water or by soaking them for 15 minutes in a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water.

Steps for Staying Safe in the Heat

Dress for the heat. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.

Drink water. When in hot temperature, carry water or sports drinks with you and drink frequently. Avoid alcoholic beverages which dehydrate the body.

Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein which increase body heat.

Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.

Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.

Stay indoors when possible.

Take regular breaks when engaged in physical activity on warm days. Take time out to find a cool place. If you recognize that you, or someone else, is showing the signals of a heat-related illness, stop activity and find a cool place.

For further information, please contact your local county health department or visit these websites:

www.floridadisaster.org

www.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater/index.html

www.redcross.org

www.ready.gov

www.fema.gov

or call your local Red Cross office

Florida Emergency Information Line: 1-800-342-3557

Florida WIC Program: Call your local WIC office or call the state WIC office toll-free at **1-800-342-3556** or visit the WIC website at **www.FloridaWIC.org**

Consumers with food safety questions can phone the toll-free **USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854**. **Food Safety website: www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe**