

FOOD SAFETY AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

After a significant earthquake, people try to save what they can, including food. Saving food may not always be a good idea as food, power resources and water may have been compromised. The following recommendations and other Environmental Health Services resources may be used to determine how food can be safely evaluated.

Food Resources

Food containers may be damaged or contaminated.



Discard foods:

- In cracked or broken glass containers.
- That have come in contact with flood or sewage water.
- If container spurts liquid or foam when you open it or the food inside is discolored, moldy or smells bad.
- In containers that are bulging, opened or damaged (dented cans may allow for bacteria to grow within the can).

Power Resources

Power may have been lost during the earthquake.



Save food properly if the power goes out by:

- Keeping refrigerator doors closed to maintain cold temperature inside.
- Placing food in clean ice and/or dry ice in a cooler.
- Checking the food's temperature by using a thermometer. Food that has been between 41°F and 135°F for more than four hours must not be eaten.
- Not refreezing thawed food. If partially thawed food contains ice crystals, it can be refrozen, refrigerated or cooked.

Water Resources

Water supplies may have been compromised.



Do not drink or use water that may be contaminated to:

- Brush your teeth.
- Prepare food.
- Wash dishes or hands.
- Make ice or baby formula.

Bottled, boiled or treated water is safe for drinking.