

# Hurricane SANDY Public Health & Safety Considerations

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## **Staying Healthy after a Flood and/or Power Outage**

- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline or raw sewage.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground.
- Stay away from damaged areas unless your assistance has been specifically requested by emergency personnel.
- Avoid moving water. As little as six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving and use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters and use extreme caution when entering previously flooded buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.
- Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwaters can contain sewage and chemicals.
- Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped.
- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
- A foot of water will float many vehicles and two feet of moving water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles and pick-ups.

## **Food Safety after a Flood and/or Power Outage**

Without electricity or a cold source, food stored in refrigerators and freezers can become unsafe. Bacteria in food grow rapidly at temperatures between 40°F and 140°F, and consuming contaminated food can lead to serious illness.

- Keep food in covered containers.
- Keep your hands clean by washing them frequently with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected.
- Discard any food that has come into contact with contaminated floodwater.
- Discard any food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more.
- Discard any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture.

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- Use ready-to-feed formula, if possible, for formula-fed infants. If using ready-to-feed formula is not possible, it is best to use bottled water to prepare powdered or concentrated formula.
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened.
- Refrigerators should be kept at 40°F or below for proper food storage.
- Once power is restored, check the temperature inside the refrigerator and freezer. If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer 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 its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40°F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible.
- Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40° F for two hours or more.
- Remember, “When in doubt, throw it out.”

### Using Dry Ice

- Under normal circumstances you should not keep dry ice in your freezer. If your freezer is functioning properly it will cause the unit to become too cold and your freezer may shut off. However, if you lose power for an extended period of time, dry ice is the best ways to keep things cold.
- Twenty-five pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer below freezing for 3-4 days.
- If you use dry ice to keep your food cold, make sure it does not come in direct contact with the food.
- Use care when handling dry ice, wear dry, heavy gloves to avoid injury.