

FRONT BURNER

FROM YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

FOOD NEEDS SPECIAL

CONSIDERATION

AFTER A FLOOD

Power outages and local flooding can increase the risk of foodborne illness. Without power, refrigerators shut down and bacteria start to grow and spread making perishable food unsafe to eat. Flood waters are severely contaminated when bacteria, viruses and parasites are picked up in the path of the flood water as it flows over ground.



FLOOD

After a flood, assess the damaged area, the food being stored and food preparation equipment. Any food (meats, fish, poultry, vegetables, fruit and even packaged food) that has come in contact with flood water needs to be thrown into the garbage. This also includes food that come packaged in glass or plastic jars where flood water may have seeped into the lids and contaminated the food.

Canned foods can be used if cleaned and disinfected before storing and opening, as long as they are intact and not damaged (dents, bulging); if damaged, they must be thrown in the garbage. For undamaged cans wash them first with a strong detergent, then rinse, and then soak in an effective bleach solution of ½ tsp. (2ml) of household bleach in 4 cups (1L) of clean warm water, to prevent potential contamination when the can is opened.

Equipment and surface areas that have been in contact with flood water can carry bacteria to your food if you don't sanitize them. Wash equipment, utensils, dishes, cutting boards (wood or plastic) and surface areas first with strong detergent, then rinse, then sanitize with an effective bleach solution. For equipment and utensils that can be immersed in a sink for a minimum of 45 seconds, sanitize by using a concentration of ½ tsp. (2ml) of household bleach in 4 cups (1L) of clean warm water. For other large contact surfaces including storage areas (cupboards/drawers) sanitize by spraying or rinsing using a solution with a concentration of 1 tsp. (5ml) of household bleach in 4 cups (1L) of clean warm water.

POWER OUTAGE

Once the power has gone out, follow these steps to try and minimize food damage:

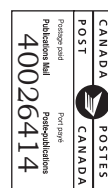
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. A door kept closed on a freezer should keep food frozen for 24 hours, and a fridge should keep food cool for 4 to 6 hours.
- Place meat, poultry or fish on the lowest shelf at the back of your refrigerator.
- In the event of open display case refrigerators, maintain proper temperature by covering food in an approved manner (tight fitting lids or clean plastic wrap).

When the power has come back on you will need to throw in the garbage any food that has been at room temperature for more than two hours, has a strange colour and/or odour. Use a metal probe thermometer to verify these food temperatures. If raw meats have leaked on shelves, clean and sanitize the area using an effective bleach solution of 1 tsp. (5ml) of household bleach in 4 cups (1L) of clean warm water.

If you are unsure if a food is safe for consuming, remember, when in doubt, throw it out.



SIMCOE MUSKOKA DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT
Health Protection Service
15 Sperling Drive, Barrie, Ontario L4M 6K9



ANSWERS TO GO

I have a rural food premise. What is my responsibility when it comes to my well and well water?

Any premise or business where drinking water is available to the public is affected by the Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE) Regulation and we strongly advise owners to contact the MOE now to determine obligations or exemptions.

If you have any questions or you would like to receive a copy of their information kit, visit their website at www.ene.gov.on.ca or call 1-800-565-4923

OUTBREAK FILES

BREAK THE CHAIN OF FOODBORNE INFECTION

In two separate incidents, one at a grocery store, the other at a resort kitchen, poor cleaning and sanitizing procedures caused outbreaks with widespread illnesses.



THE SALMONELLA FRUIT BOWLS

The grocery store offered a colourfully packaged bowl full of fresh-cut fruit for their customers. In preparing these packages, staff sliced cantaloupe, melon and a variety of fruit on a common nylon cutting board but failed to pre-wash the skins or use effective sanitizer on the knives and board during washing procedures.

Although they used a mechanical sanitizer dispensing device on the wall at the three compartment sink for the knives and cutting board they failed to check it to make sure it was working properly. As a result the fresh-cut fruit became contaminated and 29 people became very ill with five being hospitalized with Salmonella food poisoning.

THE NORWALK VIRUS

In another situation a large resort had to close for a week during their peak season, as a result of a long and widespread human illness. Inspectors found that several food handlers had continued to work while ill with vomiting and diarrhea. They also found that food preparation areas and key food contact equipment had not been sanitized with an effective chemical sanitizer. A professional cleaning company had to be hired to clean and sanitize all areas of the facility, especially the food preparation areas and washrooms in order to destroy the illness producing virus.

WHAT WERE THE LESSONS LEARNED?

- Mechanical sanitizing dispensers should be monitored daily using test strips, to ensure proper concentration of chemicals to reduce harmful bacterial and viruses likely present on multi-use utensils such as knives, cutting boards and other food contact surfaces.
- Before eating, preparing or cutting fresh fruits and vegetables; thoroughly wash them under cold running water to remove soil contaminants. For fruits and vegetables with a firm surface also scrub with a clean produce brush.
- Staff must avoid working while ill with symptoms that can be transferred to food, such as runny nose, productive cough, diarrhea, vomiting, or infected cuts on hands.
- Staff hygiene is vital and frequent handwashing must be encouraged by management.
- Washing cloths used to sanitize food contact surfaces should be stored in a liquid sanitizing solution and tested for proper concentration daily. Appropriate sanitizers approved for this purpose are chlorine at strengths of 200 ppm, 1 tsp. (5ml) of household bleach in 4 cups (1L) of clean warm water, or quaternary ammonia products at strength of 400 ppm. Avoid mixing of chemicals.

the STOCK POT

As of April 1, 2005 the Simcoe and Muskoka District Health Units merged creating the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

As a direct result of the merger, Muskoka residents and vacationers will now have access to Health Connection, a telephone and email link to health information and resources.

Inspectors are available on Health Connection Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m to 4:30 p.m. or visit our website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org



721-7520
1-877-721-7520
www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

RECIPE MAKEOVER

BEEF STEW

Original Ingredients	Nutritionists Suggestions
1.25lb lean beef, diced ½"	
2tbsp flour	
2tbsp soft margarine.....	2tbsp olive or canola oil
1/3cup spanish onion, diced	
1/3cup celery, diced	
1 cup carrots, diced	
1 cup potatoes, diced.....	1 cup frozen peas
1 tsp black pepper.....	1 tsp salt

Note from the Nutritionist:

Add more vegetables such as parsnips or turnips to add a bit more flavour and nutrition to your meal.

Wash hands thoroughly with warm water and soap.

Dice beef to ½" cubes on **sanitized** cutting board; roll into flour. Add oil to heavy pan over medium heat; brown the beef. Add water, cover and simmer for 2-2 ½ hours, do not boil.

Wash hands again with warm water and soap. **Wash and scrub** all vegetables under cold running water. Use a **new sanitized** cutting board to dice vegetables and place on clean plate; set aside.

Add diced potatoes to beef mixture; cover and cook for 10 minutes. Add onions, carrots, celery, peas, salt and black pepper; cover and simmer for 5-10 minutes until beef and vegetables are tender; do not boil.

Original Recipe courtesy of Grove Park Nursing Home in Barrie.