

DISASTER QUICK TIPS: Food Donations - Food Safety

Use these tips to plan safe food donations. People in a disaster can be at greater risk for getting sick from unsafe food. Foodborne illness can spread in large groups of people. Safe food donations can help avoid foodborne illness.

Many people want to help during a disaster. They may want to bring food for residents and workers. However, food from a home is not acceptable. It is hard to be sure that food from a home will not result in foodborne illness.

Foodborne Illness

People can get very sick if they eat unsafe food. Food can be unsafe if it has germs in it, or has not been cooked at high enough temperatures, or has not been kept cold enough. Unsafe food can cause vomiting, diarrhea, stomachaches, headaches, and muscle pains. Foodborne illness can be even more serious for babies, pregnant women, children, older adults, and people with health issues.

Food Safety

Disaster feeding centers use trained food workers to serve safe food to groups. They make sure the food and drink they obtain, prepare and serve is safe. They use equipment that helps keep food safe.

Floodwater must not touch food or packages that hold food or drink.

What to Donate

- Donate food and drink that is commercially prepared, packaged, and unopened.
- Do not donate food that must be kept cold, frozen or hot to be safe to eat.

Food and drink prepared at home are not acceptable.

Donate these needed items:

- Baby formula, liquid or powdered, for mixing with commercially-bottled water;
- Boxed or bagged food;
- Canned food;
- Commercially bottled juices;
- Commercially bottled water;
- Dried, packaged food;
- Fruit that is whole, uncut, unpeeled; and
- Drinks in cans or bottles.

Operators of feeding centers can use money for food, drink, and supplies.

Thank you for your thoughtful donation.

Note: MDH has detailed fact sheets on more topics. See page 2.



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MDH Environmental Health Flood information

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/floods

MDH District Offices

Bemidji	218-308-2100
Duluth	218-723-4642
Fergus Falls	218-332-5150
Mankato	507-344-2700
Marshall	507-537-7151
Metro	651-201-4500
Rochester	507-206-2700
St. Cloud	320-223-7300

MDH Environmental Health Contacts

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/contactus.htm

Asbestos

Asbestos and Lead Compliance: 651-201-4620

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/asbestos

Carbon Monoxide and Mold

MDH Indoor Air Quality: 651-201-4601 or 800-798-9050

E-mail: health.indoorair@state.mn.us

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/air

Cleaning-up and Food Safety

MDH Food, Beverage and Lodging: 651-201-4500

E-mail: health.foodlodging@state.mn.us

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety

Public Drinking Water

MDH Drinking Water Protection: 651-201-4700

E-mail: health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/water

Wells and Well Water

MDH Well Management: 651-201-4600 or 1-800-383-9808

E-mail: health.wells@state.mn.us

Website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells

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