Fact Sheet: Food Safety During An Emergency

During an emergency, food and water are necessities. During emergencies you may not be able to obtain water and food. During emergencies your home food and water supplies may be damaged, deteriorated, or destroyed. Floods, hurricanes, power outages and other disasters may cause extensive disruptions in everyday lifestyles. Consider these recommendations when preparing for an emergency. There are some steps that you can take before a pending emergency. Store food items and bottled water along with other items needed during an emergency. The recommended foods include:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables.
- Canned juices, milk, and soup.
- High energy foods - such as, peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail mix
- Comfort foods – such as, hard candy, sweetened cereals, candy bars and cookies
- Instant coffee and tea bags
- Compressed food bars
- Trail mix
- Dried foods
- Freeze-dried foods
- Instant meals – cups of noodles or cups of soup are a good addition
- Prepackaged beverages – those in foil packets and foil-lined boxes

Do's and Don'ts during an emergency

DO

Do throw out any food with a strange color or odor as soon as possible. If available, store freezer and perishable items in a cooler packed with ice.

Do make sure that raw meat, poultry or fish are wrapped very well and placed in the coldest section of your refrigerator.

Do contact your doctor or local pharmacist, if you need information on proper storage of your prescription drugs that require refrigeration, such as insulin.

DON'T

Do not open the refrigerator or freezer more than is necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold longer. Discard perishable foods if the electrical power to your refrigerator has been off for more than 4 to 6 hours.

For more information, please contact the
Food Safety and Hygiene Inspection Services Division at

food.safety@dc.gov