

FOOD Insight™

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Calories Count, but... Consumers Don't Seem to Know How: Food and Health Survey Highlights Six "Diet Disconnects"

Information that will both encourage and frustrate those interested in communicating nutrition messages to the American public can be found in the second annual IFIC Foundation's *Food and Health Survey: Consumer Attitudes toward Food, Nutrition, and Health*.

The research provides the opportunity to see how consumers view their own diets, their efforts to improve them, and their understanding of the inter-relationship between diet, physical activity, and health.

The survey of 1,000 American adults was conducted over three weeks in February and March of 2007.

Overall, Americans' perception of their health improved, with 39 percent indicating their health as "excellent" or "very good" compared to 33 percent in 2006. In addition, more Americans (66 percent) reported making changes to improve the healthfulness of their diet compared to 57 percent in 2006.

But the survey did find areas where Americans' desire to improve their diet and overall health did not match

what they actually do on a day-to-day basis. For instance, more than half of Americans (56 percent) say they are trying to lose weight, and a majority of them say they are trying to improve the healthfulness of their diet and increase their level of physical activity. Yet, nine out of 10 Americans did not know how many calories they should consume in a day. This lack of knowledge of calories was unchanged from last year's survey.

The conflicting findings on calories represent just one of six consumer "diet disconnects" identified in the survey. "This survey is an important snapshot highlighting the gap between Americans' desire to have a more healthful diet and the reality of converting this desire into day-to-day behavior," said Susan Borra, RD, IFIC Foundation President.

The "diet disconnects" revealed in the latest look at consumer attitudes on food, nutrition, and health include everything from carbohydrates and dietary fats, to how consumers link nutrition and physical health, to what they consider the most important meal of the day. "Uncovering these

'disconnects,' said Borra, "is the first step to really helping consumers achieve an overall healthful lifestyle."

The other "diet disconnects" include:

Diet & Physical Activity: A clear majority of Americans (84 percent) reported being physically active, for health benefits, at least once a week. This represented a 20 percent increase over last year's survey, although the definition of "physical activity" was broadened to include activities such as gardening and dancing, which may account for the increase. However, nearly half (44 percent) of Americans who reported being physically active said they did not "balance diet and physical activity" to manage their weight.

Breakfast: Breakfast was found to be the most important meal of the day, with 66 percent of Americans indicating the morning meal was "extremely important." But, less than half of Americans (49 percent) reported eating breakfast every day. Dinner was second on the "extremely important" list at 43 percent, with lunch being selected by 33 percent.

Fats: Consumers' concern about the type and amount of fats they include in their diet was significantly up from a year ago (72 percent vs. 66 percent)

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A Healthful Diet: Are Individuals Missing the Big Picture?



Healthful eating includes selecting a wide and colorful array of foods from the five food groups, using healthful oils and eating just the right amount of calories. And, of course, it has to be pleasing to the palate.

However, the diets of many consumers are missing pieces that prevent them from enjoying all the benefits healthful eating has to offer. Health communicators can read on to learn about common consumer stumbling blocks and ideas to help them choose diets that are the picture of good health.



Stumbling block: Falling short on one or more food groups. Many people aren't consuming the recommended amounts of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products. They might not know they're falling short, how much they need, or how to get enough.

Solution: Urge them to follow an eating plan such as the *MyPyramid* or Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH). They're balanced, based on sound science, and easy to follow. See the "Putting it All Together" sidebar for more information.



Stumbling block: Following the latest fad. Many popular diets are notorious for banning certain foods or even entire food groups. For example, many popular diets eliminate nutritious foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. Generally, consumers know these diets aren't the best for good health, but look to them as a temporary "quick fix" until they take off the pounds.

Solution: Give consumers the good news that a balanced eating plan is

multi-purposed: it not only promotes good health, but can also help them lose weight and prevent health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. Fortunately, people tend to tire quickly of lopsided diets that exclude foods they like. Help them along by emphasizing the health benefits of the foods that they are excluding and how eating a balanced diet can help them feel better and have more energy. This may help motivate consumers.



Stumbling block: Missing the moderation message for favorite foods. Some consumers mistakenly believe that many foods they like, such as candy, desserts,

or certain snacks are "bad" and can't fit into a healthful diet. Ironically, the belief that favorite foods must be banned is a major obstacle that prevents many people from doing more to improve their diets.

Solution: As a health professional or nutrition educator it may be helpful to use a positive approach to teach consumers that they can enjoy treats as part of a balanced, healthful diet. Introduce interactive tools, such as *MyPyramid Tracker* (<http://www.mypyramidtracker.gov/>) to show consumers the whole picture, including what nutrient needs they have met and where they can fit in "treats." Consumers can also learn to make "balance" a part of everyday living by practicing small trade-offs that can alleviate feelings of deprivation. For instance, if you eat a larger lunch, go for a lighter dinner of a bowl of soup and a small plate of salad.

Stumbling block: Not Viewing a food's

total nutrient package. Some people shun a nutritious food because it contains an ingredient such as added sugars or sodium. See "Know Your Numbers" for a 2000 calorie per day diet.

Solution: Encourage a total diet focus and explain how certain ingredients can make nutritious foods more palatable—for example, the sodium in a vegetable soup or sugars found in calcium-rich yogurt.



Stumbling block: Being confused about nutrients or "over focusing" on just one. Many consumers can tick off a whole list of basic nutrients such as carbohydrates, calcium, and vitamin C, as

well as popular food components such as omega-3s and lycopene. But name recognition doesn't mean consumers understand how nutrients benefit the body, what foods they're found in, how much of a nutrient they are supposed to have in a day, or how to apply this information to their lifestyles. Also, when consumers constantly hear about one nutrient in the news, they sometimes think that's the only one it's important to pay attention to, such as including or excluding vitamin D, trans fat, sodium, etc.

Solution: Consumers find it motivating to hear about potential benefits from consuming a certain food or nutrient, which may encourage them to try new foods and expand their dietary horizons. So, explain that they need a full range of nutrients and food groups, and serve up the benefits, along with practical food-based tips like the ones in the "Know Your Numbers" tip box for a well-rounded diet.

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Stumbling block: **Losing sight of portions.** Consumers sometimes interpret product attributes such as “fat-free” or “cholesterol-free” as license to consume large portion sizes.

Solution: Point out that foods with reduced or low levels of fat, cholesterol, or sodium can help them meet dietary recommendations, but don’t necessarily mean that the food is reduced in calories. Caution consumers to carefully read the serving size and calories per serving before deciding how much to eat.



Stumbling block: **Taking a single-focus approach to healthful eating.** Some people striving to eat well may ultimately short-circuit their own efforts by overdoing one healthful

eating recommendation. For example, someone who fastidiously avoids dietary fat may not know they need to consume some fat to absorb the fat-soluble vitamins and phytonutrients in foods.

Solution: Take their interest in eating well to the next level by providing food-based tips that enhance their eating plans. For instance, if someone is only reducing sodium in their diet for blood pressure, encourage them to also increase potassium-containing foods such as fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, because potassium helps normalize blood pressure.



Stumbling block: **Wondering who’s the authority.** Consumers say they’re bombarded with often-contradictory nutrition information from a variety of sources and find it difficult to separate science-based advice

from faulty information. Consumer information sources range from health professionals and the government to the media and the Internet to the latest diet guru, family members, and the next door neighbor.

Solution: Help put contradictory information into context and establish yourself as the expert, repeatedly

promoting scientifically sound nutrition information from sources such as the United States Department of Agriculture (www.mypyramid.gov) and the American Dietetic Association (www.eatright.org).



Stumbling block: **Overlooking other lifestyle factors.** Someone who eats well, but who is sedentary or smokes, doesn’t get the big picture of good health.

Solution: A balanced eating plan is a critical part—but not the only part—of a healthful lifestyle. Nutrition educators can encourage consumers to practice other health-promoting behaviors such as getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, not smoking, managing stress, and getting enough sleep.

Putting It All Together: Two All-Encompassing Eating Plans

To achieve a balanced, healthful diet, the *Dietary Guidelines* recommend two similar eating patterns—*MyPyramid*, which is based on the USDA Food Guide—and the DASH Eating Plan. Both plans provide the framework for a healthful diet—including all five food groups with a focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products—while offering flexibility and variety in food choices to suit individual preferences and dietary, including calorie, needs.

- Show consumers how to get their own customized *MyPyramid* plan based on their age, sex, height, weight, and level of physical activity at (www.mypyramid.gov).
- See an example of the DASH Eating Plan based on 2,000 calories a day at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/h_eating/h_e_dash.htm.

“BENEFICIAL” FOOD TIPS



- Energize your day with a balanced breakfast. Try whole grain cereal with strawberries and fat-free milk.
- For healthy bones, enjoy a calcium-packed snack like your favorite low-fat yogurt.
- Add nutritious veggies the easy way by heating canned soup with some frozen spinach or mixed vegetables.
- Serve baked sweet potatoes as a side dish to get a boost of potassium, fiber, and vitamins A and C.
- Enjoy a handful of nuts or sunflower seeds for healthful oils, fiber, and vitamin E.

ARE THERE PIECES MISSING FROM YOUR DIET?

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005* identified seven “nutrients of concern” in the diets of adults, meaning that many people aren’t consuming recommended amounts. These nutrients are shown on page 6, along with why it’s important to get enough and a few of their best food sources. For more information, visit the *Dietary Guidelines* Web site at www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines.

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Diet Disconnects

and they are specifically trying to consume less *trans* fat (78 percent in 2007 vs. 54 percent in 2006). However, consumers are apparently unclear about which fats are considered healthful. For example, Americans report trying to consume less polyunsaturated fats, one of the fats recommended for health benefits. The percentage of Americans who said they were trying to eat less polyunsaturated fats jumped from 33 percent in 2006 to 42 percent in 2007.

“Carbs:” Consumers are getting the message that certain types of carbohydrates can improve the overall healthfulness of their diet. Specifically, more than 70 percent of consumers say they are trying to consume more carbohydrates like fiber and whole grains. But more than 50 percent remain concerned with the amount of carbohydrates they consume, which is not surprising given the recent attention to fad diets that promote decreased consumption of carbohydrates.

“Functional Foods”: Consumers agree that consuming specific foods and beverages can provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition. These benefits include improving heart health (80 percent); improving digestive health (76 percent); and improving physical energy or stamina (76 percent). But more than 50 percent of Americans say they currently do not consume foods or beverages that may deliver these benefits. For instance, despite overwhelming agreement that specific foods and beverages can “improve heart health,” 58 percent of consumers said they did not consume these products.

“Since the science concerning food, nutrition, and health is continually evolving there is an ongoing need to provide clarity,” said Borra. “Our survey shows that there is an opportunity for all of us in the nutrition field to make diet information more understandable for consumers.”

The survey also included questions about consumers’ perceptions of caffeine and health. Forty-eight percent of Americans said they actively limit or are trying to limit their caffeine consumption, while 40 percent do not limit caffeine and 12 percent have eliminated caffeine from their diets. Despite this, there is some confusion over some potential benefits of caffeine. Consumers’ perceptions of whether caffeine-containing beverages can contribute to daily water intake cover the spectrum—30 percent somewhat or strongly agree, 31 percent neither agree nor disagree, and 38 percent somewhat or strongly disagree. And regarding athletic performance, 50 percent neither agree nor disagree that caffeine can enhance performance by increasing endurance and reducing muscle pain caused by strenuous physical activity.

With regard to low-calorie sweeteners, responses showed that almost half (43 percent) somewhat or strongly agree that low-calorie sweeteners can play a role in helping individuals lose or maintain weight. However, only 23 percent of those trying to lose weight and 22 percent of those trying to maintain their weight say they increased their use of low-calorie sweeteners in their efforts to do so.

The IFIC Foundation plans to continue to monitor these trends and report the results of the *Food and Health* survey every one to two years.

For a PDF copy of the entire survey visit:

<http://www.ific.org/research/foodandhealthsurvey.cfm>

For consumer-friendly information about implementing the *MyPyramid* guidance visit:

<http://www.ific.org/publications/brochures/upload/MyPyramidBrochure.pdf>

A Calorie is a Calorie is a Calorie: It Depends on Who You Ask

While nutrition is an evolving science, health professionals, government, and nutrition scientists alike have long agreed on one thing—calories. Specifically, it has been established that 1) calories are important; 2) weight is managed based on calories consumed and calories expended; and 3) a calorie is a calorie, regardless of the source (i.e., dietary fats, carbohydrates, protein). In other words, while we know that dietary fats contain more calories per gram than carbohydrates and protein, it is the total amount of calories that an individual consumes in a day, along with the amount that they burn off, that affects the ability to maintain their weight.

In health professional circles, calories have recently taken center stage as the weight management issue has escalated. In 2004, the Food and Drug Administration released a report titled “Calories Count.” The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* have calories as the foundation of their guidance and recommend, among other things, that individuals consume “adequate nutrients within calorie needs.” Finally, the *MyPyramid* food guidance system, which is based on the *Dietary Guidelines*, disseminates key advice to find the balance between food and physical activity for you, get the most nutrition out of your calories, and stay within your daily caloric needs.

So, given this advice, what do consumers know about the concept that excess calories, regardless of source, cause weight gain. In the 2006 *IFIC Foundation Food & Health Survey*, only 29 percent answered the question correctly that calories in general cause weight gain. Twenty-two percent were not sure, 26 percent thought that fats were uniquely fattening, and 20 percent thought that calories from carbohydrates were more likely to cause weight gain. Only 2 percent of consumers thought that protein was the culprit in weight gain. This question was trended in 2007. Findings indicated that the concept that a calorie is a calorie had not yet reached consumers, with 29 percent saying fats, 18 percent carbohydrates, 1 percent protein, and 20 percent unsure about what causes weight gain. Only 31 percent correctly stating that excess calories in general cause weight gain.

Global Food Safety and the Melamine Contamination

Melamine: What is it? Where does it come from? How did it get into our pet food and eventually make its way into animal feed and fish feed? What, if any, is the impact on human health and what efforts are in place to continue to protect the safety and integrity of the food we eat? These questions are part of an ongoing investigation that delves into the regulation of food imports and the infrastructure of food safety regulatory systems across the world.

The events that started in March 2007 as the largest pet food recall in U.S. history grew into a complex food safety issue. It was discovered that the same ingredients used in pet food contaminated with melamine had been used to produce farm animal feed and fish feed. In April alone, 107 food imports from China were held by the U.S. government, and, in May, warnings about tainted toothpaste from China were also disclosed. As a growing number of internationally-sourced foods become available on the U.S. market, it is important for Americans to be aware of the measures being taken to keep contaminated foods out of the marketplace.

Initially, numerous cat and dog illnesses were linked to the contaminated pet food, which triggered immediate voluntary recalls of more than 100 brand name products. Within 24 hours of being notified of the problem, FDA investigators visited the Kansas processing facility where the contaminated pet food was being produced and obtained samples of wheat gluten - a food ingredient desired for its higher protein content than wheat flour - used during production. The laboratory test results of these samples detected the presence of melamine. The source of the wheat gluten was traced

back to a supplier in China, where it was quickly revealed that this was an intentional adulteration. The melamine was being added to wheat flour in order to pass it off as a higher quality wheat gluten product.

As the investigation continued, more announcements about tainted food imports were made by the FDA. In April, we learned this same contaminated wheat gluten was also being used in the production of livestock feed, which intensified investigations as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) became actively involved. While FDA regulates livestock feed, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulates meat and poultry used for human consumption. As concern grew and groups began making calls for a total ban on food imports from China, the FDA proactively subjected all vegetable proteins imported from China to detention. Both hogs and poultry fed rations supplemented with pet food scraps containing melamine and related compounds were initially held on their farms while the risk to human health was being studied.

A collaboration of scientists from the FDA, USDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Homeland Security released an interim report called the "Interim Melamine and Analogues Safety/Risk Assessment." Although the report is waiting for external scientific experts to review it before it can be finalized, the agency scientists concluded, "the consumption of pork, chicken, domestic fish and eggs from animals inadvertently fed animal feed contaminated with melamine and its analogues is very unlikely to pose a human health risk." According to earlier testing, "a person weighing 132 pounds would have to eat more

than 800 pounds per day of chicken [or pork] containing melamine and its compounds to approach a level of consumption that would cause a health concern." As an added precaution, CDC used its surveillance network to monitor for signs of human illness, and no problems have been detected to date.

Melamine is a chemical traditionally used in the production of plastics, specifically fire-resistant and heat-tolerant industrial products, such as countertops, fabrics, cooking utensils, glues and flame retardants. It is not approved for use as a food ingredient in the U.S., which includes both domestic and foreign manufacturers whose products enter the U.S. food supply chain. Since the disclosure of the Chinese contaminations, it was also discovered that two U.S.-based feed manufacturers had been using melamine at much lower levels in fish and livestock feed in order to create a specific pellet form. By itself, melamine is not known to be highly toxic, so scientific investigators now think it is a mixture of melamine and another chemical—cyanuric acid—added to the Chinese wheat flour that is causing crystal formation in the kidneys of cats, dogs and other domesticated animals.

For more information on the evolution of the pet food recall, visit <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html>, or check the FDA home page at www.fda.gov for frequently updated information. The FSIS notice regarding animal feed is at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2007-0018.htm>, and the interim safety and risk assessment on melamine and its analogues can be found at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/melamra.html>.

A Healthful Diet

Know Your Numbers

Many people do not know how they stack up or how to manage nutrients of concern in a daily diet. Consumers can keep these in mind when checking the food label.

<u>NUTRIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT PER DAY</u>
Total fat.....	Less than 65 grams
Saturated fat.....	Less than 20 grams
Cholesterol.....	Less than 300 milligrams
Sodium.....	Less than 2300 milligrams
Total carbohydrate.....	300 grams
Dietary fiber.....	25 grams

NUTRIENT	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT	WHERE TO GET IT
Calcium 1,000 mg/day	Helps build and maintain strong bones; plays a role in muscle and nerve function.	Milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified ready-to-eat cereals, calcium-fortified beverages, collards, spinach, turnip greens, and soybeans, fortified foods and beverages
Potassium 4,700 mg/day	Helps maintain normal blood pressure by offsetting the effects of sodium; helps regulate the body's fluid and mineral balance; helps with nerve impulse transmission and muscle contraction.	Sweet potatoes, potatoes, beet greens, white beans, prune juice, yogurt, halibut, tuna, lima beans, bananas, and low-fat dairy products
Fiber 25 g/day	Insoluble fiber promotes digestive regularity; soluble fiber helps lower blood cholesterol levels.	Dry beans such as navy, kidney, and lima beans; split peas; lentils; 100 percent bran cereals and whole grain breads; sweet potatoes; spinach; pears; raspberries; whole-wheat spaghetti; oatmeal
Magnesium 310 mg/day	An important part of the body's enzyme system; helps promote normal nerve and muscle function.	Pumpkin seed kernels, Brazil nuts, 100 percent bran cereals and whole grain breads, halibut, spinach, nuts, peanuts
Vitamin A 700 mg/day	Promotes normal vision, and healthy cells and tissues.	Liver, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, carrots, spinach, collards, kale, cantaloupe
Vitamin C 75 mg/day	Helps form the body's connective tissue; promotes healthy gums and capillaries.	Guava, red sweet pepper, kiwi, oranges, strawberries, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, pineapple, potatoes
Vitamin E 15 mg/day	Serves as an antioxidant that may help prevent the oxidation of LDL cholesterol.	Fortified ready-to-eat cereals, nuts, seeds, peanuts, vegetable oils, wheat germ, avocados, spinach, sardines

* Recommended Daily Allowance and Adequate Intake are based on Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005

IOM Recommends Tightening the Belt on Foods in Schools

On April 25, 2007, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies released its report, "Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way toward Healthier Youth." The report provides specific recommendations for foods and beverages that are sold outside the National School Lunch Program, i.e., foods that "compete" with school meals, or "competitive foods." These foods are provided in a la carte lines, vending machines, snack bars, celebrations, and fundraising, and during both school and after-school hours.

The IOM Committee importantly notes that the report is a guidepost, not the law. It is intended to provide a "framework for implementation" of school wellness policies, which were mandated by the Child Nutrition and Women Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004. Nonetheless, the recommendations in the report have the potential for far-reaching influence, from local school districts, to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the regulatory and legislative bodies that influence those systems.

The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* provide scientific grounding for the standards recommended by the IOM. However, the report treats competitive foods as discretionary calories, with each food judged on its individual ability to meet the 2005 *Guidelines*. Some criticize the IOM for inappropriately applying the *Dietary Guidelines* to individual foods. This is a unique application of the *Dietary Guidelines*, which are designed for use in building an overall healthful diet. Policymakers will likely consider these distinctions when revising federal school meal programs.

Potential for far-reaching impact

The IOM recommendations for competitive foods establish a two-tier system that provides some distinction regarding the child's age and the context in which the food is consumed. While most foods available throughout the day for all grade levels would be held to the stricter Tier 1 standards, some flexibility would be granted for Tier 2 foods consumed by high school students during after-school activities. Few restrictions are recommended for foods and beverages served during after-school activities attended by students and fundraising events.

Consistent with the 2005 *Guidelines*, the standards aim to encourage fruits, nonfat and low-fat dairy, vegetables, and whole grains. Many children do not consume enough of these foods to meet their needs for critical nutrients. Also based on the 2005 *Guidelines*, the IOM report seeks to limit foods that are high in calories, fats, sodium, or added sugars. Beverages would be limited to water, nonfat and low-fat milk (including lactose-free), calcium-fortified soy milk, and 100 percent fruit juice.

The IOM report goes beyond the principles of the 2005 *Guidelines*, recommending restrictions on low-calorie sweeteners, caffeine, fortification and carbonation. The caloric content of individual foods and beverages would also be restricted.

Helping Schools and Students in the Nutrition Transition

The IOM recommendations, as well as standards that are being set in place as part of school wellness policies all over the country, are likely to touch a sensitive spot for schools, parents and students alike, as society attempts to repair the disconnects that exist between food, nutrition, physical activity and good health. It will be critical to raise

awareness and knowledge regarding the rationale for achieving healthful eating goals among children. And it will be important to provide practical tips that educators can use to drive the message home. The *Kidnetic.com Leader's Guide: Healthy Eating & Active Living Ideas for Kids and Families* is an ideal tool for educators in this evolving environment. The *Leader's Guide* offers 13 peer-reviewed modules, appropriate for use in schools, after-school programs, or community-based health education programs (<http://www.ific.org/kidnetic/leadersguide.cfm>).

It is equally important to help parents in their own efforts to create a healthful home environment. To that end, the *Kidnetic.com Real-Life Guide for Parents: Helping Your Kids Eat Right and Be Active* offers realistic tips to help parents become good role models for their children when it comes to matters of nutrition and physical activity (<http://www.ific.org/publications/brochures/parentsguide.cfm>).

These are just a few examples of many efforts under way across the nationwide community to help children lead more healthy lifestyles. Along with setting standards for the nutritional quality of foods to which kids have access in schools, such tools will help to encourage the integration of healthful living habits into all aspects of children's ...and adults'...lives.

Natural Disasters and Severe Weather: Food and Water Safety

With hurricane season quickly approaching, many will begin preparing their households for severe weather conditions. Included in those weather preparations, federal government agencies recommend making ready a safe food and water supply which can be consumed even during a power outage. The following are some simple

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Natural Disasters and Severe Weather: Food and Water Safety

steps to be taken in preparation for severe weather conditions:

FOOD:

- Always maintain a supply of 3 days worth of canned goods which are stored above a height in danger of flooding.
- In the event of a power outage, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- A freezer unit can conserve foods at safe temperatures for up to 48 hours if left unopened. A refrigerator can only keep food safe for 4 hours if left closed.
- As a general rule, do not consume perishable food products after they have been held above 40°F for more than 2 hours. If in doubt, throw it out.
- Thoroughly wash countertops, dishes, and utensils and allow to air-dry.

WATER:

- Always keep a supply of bottled water stored above a height in danger of flooding. If any flooding has occurred, only drink the bottled water.
- If any flood water has reached the stored water, it may have become contaminated.
- If access to heat exists, boiling the water supply is one way to remove microbial contaminants.
- Water is essential to survival in the event of a natural disaster and special precaution should be taken to ensure a safe water supply for any length of time.

If you are in an area affected by severe weather and need more food and water safety information, contact the USDA at 1-888-674-6854, the FDA at 1-888-SAFEFOOD, or the CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Sources:

Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition:
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fsdisasm.html>

United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service:
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Emergency_Preparedness_Fact_Sheets/index.asp

United States Department of Homeland Security:
<http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/index.html>

Federal Emergency Management Administration:
<http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/basickit.shtm>

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