



# Fires: Four Tips to Reduce Food Safety Risks

**For households**

Fires, explosions and volcanic eruptions can damage and contaminate your food and water due to heat, smoke, fumes and chemicals. Keep yourself and your family safe and healthy by following these simple tips.

## TIP 1

**Decontaminate or discard food with signs of contamination.**

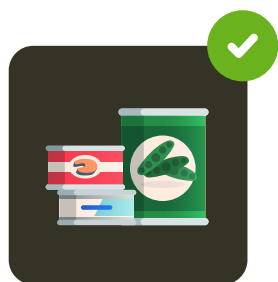


**Discard food that has been exposed to smoke, fumes or chemicals containing toxins that cannot be washed off.**

**When in doubt, throw food out. Contaminated food to be discarded may include:**

- Raw, fresh and non-refrigerated food such as vegetables, fruits, potatoes and rice.
- Food in permeable packaging such as cardboard, plastic wrap, cans, screw-topped jars and bottles.

**Assess your food stock.** Discard food that shows signs of heat exposure and unpackaged food that has been exposed to smoke, fumes or firefighting chemicals.



Food in cans or jars may appear to be okay, but if they have been close to the heat of a fire, they may no longer be safe.



Any type of food stored in permeable packaging — cardboard, plastic wrap, etc. — should be thrown away. Toxic fumes can permeate the packaging and contaminate the food.



Food exposed to smoke or fumes should be discarded. This includes unpackaged food in refrigerators, which are not airtight.

## TIP 2

### Keep food and preparation areas clean and safe.



**Check water sources.** If your water has changed colour or has a foul or chemical smell, do not consume it. Instead, find alternative sources for water, such as water trucks.



**Chemicals used to fight fires contain toxic materials and can contaminate food and cookware.**

Washing food does not remove chemicals. Any food that has been exposed to chemicals should be discarded, including crops grown in agricultural fields.



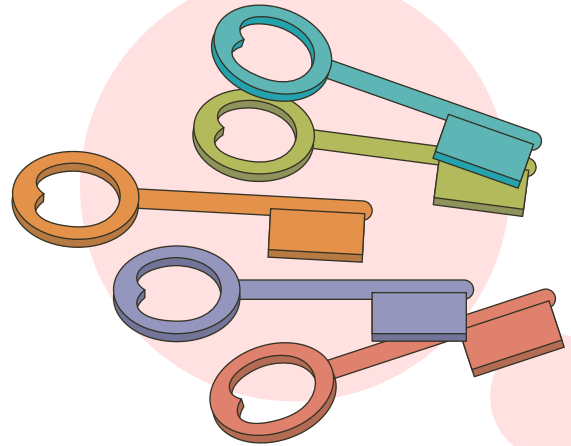
**Canned goods and cookware exposed to chemicals can be decontaminated.** Wash in a strong detergent solution, then soak items for 15 minutes in a solution of 1.5 tablespoons of unscented liquid chlorine bleach per five litres of water.

## TIP 3

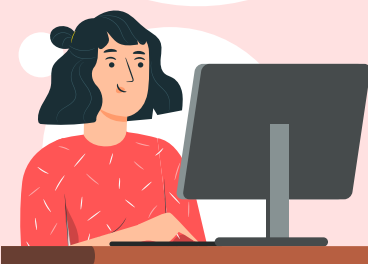
### Maintain good food hygiene.

Follow the five keys to safer food.

- 1 Keep clean
- 2 Separate raw and cooked food
- 3 Cook thoroughly
- 4 Keep food at safe temperatures
- 5 Use safe water and raw ingredients



**Maintain exclusive breastfeeding of infants under six months.** Do not give them water or other fluids that may contain chemical toxins or microorganisms that may infect them.



## TIP 4

### Stay informed and healthy.

- **Follow the advice of local authorities responsible for food safety.** Share this information with your family members and neighbours.
- **Seek help from a health facility if anyone in your household gets sick.**

For more information, please visit **The Five Keys to Safer Food Programme** recommended by the World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-safe-food-handling>

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