

Refrigeration and Keeping Cool

Share your creative ways to keep food/medications/formula cold or beat the heat and we'll post them here.

Steps to Follow During and After a Power Outage

www.fsis.usda.gov

Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer. An appliance thermometer will indicate the temperature in the refrigerator and freezer in case of a power outage and help determine the safety of the food.

- Make sure the freezer is at 0 °F (Fahrenheit) or below and the refrigerator is at 40 °F or below.
- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator, or coolers after the power is out.
- Freeze refrigerated items such as leftovers, milk, and fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately—this helps keep them at a safe temperature longer. Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerator food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours. Purchase or make ice cubes and store in the freezer for use in the refrigerator or in a cooler. Freeze gel packs ahead of time for use in coolers. Group food together in the freezer—this helps the food stay cold longer.
- Never taste a food to determine its safety!
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.
- The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full and the door remains closed).
- Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below.
- Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased. Obtain block ice or dry ice to keep your refrigerator and freezer as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot full freezer for 2 days.
- If the power has been out for several days, then check the temperature of the freezer with an appliance thermometer or food thermometer. If the food still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below, the food is safe.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, then check each package of food to determine its safety. If the food still contains ice crystals, the food is safe.
- Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers, and deli items after 4 hours without power.
- **When in Doubt, Throw it Out!**