Know the proper food safety precautions to take before, during and after a power outage. Below are some action steps to take for food in your refrigerator and freezer.

**Before a power outage**
- Make sure you have appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer.
- Check that the freezer temperature is at or below 0° F, and the refrigerator is at or below 40° F.
- In case of a power outage, the appliance thermometers will indicate the temperatures in the refrigerator and freezer to help you determine if the food is safe.
- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator or coolers in case the power goes out. Melting ice can also supply drinking water.
- 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.
- Group food together in the freezer. This helps the food stay cold longer.
- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerated food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours.
- Purchase or make ice cubes in advance, and freeze gel packs ahead of time. Store all of these in the freezer for future use in the refrigerator or in coolers.

**During a power outage**
- Keep the refrigerator door closed as much as possible.
- Buy dry or block ice to keep the refrigerator as cold as possible if power will be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should keep an 18 cubic foot, fully stocked freezer cold for two days.
- The food in your refrigerator will keep safe for up to 4 hours during a power outage. A full freezer will hold a safe temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half-full and the door remains closed).

**After a power outage**
After a power outage, never taste food to determine its safety. You will have to evaluate each item separately – use the chart on the reverse side as a general guide. **When in doubt, throw it out!**
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours and the refrigerator door was kept shut. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been at temperatures above 40° F for 2 hours or more (or 1 hour if temperatures are above 90° F).
- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 40° F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.
- Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40°F or below, however, its quality may suffer.
- Perishable food such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk and eggs that are not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked.
# Refrigerated Food and Power Outages

When to Save It and When to Throw It Out

For food held above 40°F for more than 2 hours:  
- **X** = discard  
- **✓** = keep

## MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD
- Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish or seafood; soy meat substitutes
- Thawing meat or poultry
- Salads: Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken or egg salad
- Gravy, stuffing, broth
- Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef
- Pizza with any topping
- Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"
- Canned meats and fish, opened
- Casseroles, soups, stews

## CHEESE
- Soft cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco
- Hard cheeses: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano
- Processed cheeses
- Shredded cheeses
- Low-fat cheeses
- Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar)

## DAIRY
- Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk
- Butter, margarine
- Baby formula, opened

## EGGS
- Fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products
- Custards and puddings, quiche

## FRUITS
- Fresh fruits, uncut
- Fruit juices, opened
- Canned fruits, opened
- Dried fruits, raisins, candied fruits, dates
- Sliced or shredded coconut

## SAUCES, SPREADS, JAMS
- Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish (if above 50 °F for more than 8 hrs)
- Peanut butter
- Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives, pickles
- Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, hoisin sauces
- Fish sauces, oyster sauce
- Opened vinegar-based dressings
- Opened creamy-based dressings
- Spaghetti sauce, opened

## BREAD, CAKES, COOKIES, PASTA, GRAINS
- Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas
- Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough
- Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes
- Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette
- Fresh pasta
- Cheesecake
- Breakfast foods: waffles, pancakes, bagels

## PIEs AND PASTRY
- Cream filled pastries
- Pies: custard, cheese-filled, or chiffon; quiche
- Fruit pies

## VEGETABLES
- Fresh vegetables, cut
- Fresh vegetables, uncut
- Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices
- Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged
- Vegetables, cooked
- Tofu, cooked
- Vegetable juice, opened
- Baked potatoes
- Commercial garlic in oil
- Potato salad
- Casseroles, soups, stews

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Information provided by [Foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov)