

Safety of Refrigerated Foods After a Power Outage

The information on the next five pages is derived from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Land Grant University of the state of Maine and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. This is information to share with consumers. This can also serve as useful reference information for regulators.

Note that temperature recommendations are for consumers (40°F & 140°F). If applied to food establishments, use appropriate commercial, regulatory temperature standards.

Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.

All chopped meats, poultry and seafood sandwich fillings should not be left without refrigeration for more than two hours. If any perishable or potentially hazardous foods have exceeded 40 degrees F for more than two hours, throw it away.

Do not trust your eyes and sense of smell. Food may be unsafe, even if it doesn't smell bad or even if it looks safe.

You can extend your food supply by cooking all unspoiled meat immediately. Cooked meat needs to be kept above 140 degrees F if it cannot be cooled below 40 degrees F within four hours. A food thermometer will help you check food temperatures.

Here are some tips on popular perishable foods.

- **Large, solid, unbound pieces of fresh beef or lamb**, such as rump roast or leg of lamb, are least susceptible to quick spoilage.
- **Uncured sausage** is vulnerable to contamination because it is free of preservatives. Keep it frozen as long as possible, then cook before it completely thaws.
- **Raw chopped meats, like hamburger**, spoil quickly. Pork, fish and poultry spoil quickly, too. Dispose of these foods if they have been in a well-insulated, good working refrigerator without power for 12 hours or more and have exceeded 40 degrees F. **Do not trust your sense of smell.** Food may be unsafe, even if it doesn't smell bad.

- **Hard cheese** (like Romano, Cheddar, and Parmesan) usually keeps well at room temperatures. Throw them out when an off-flavor or unusual mold develops. Other cheeses, such as cream cheese, opened containers of cheese spreads and cottage cheese, brie, and gouda spoil quickly.
- **Milk** spoils quickly without refrigeration. Throw out spoiled milk. Soured milk may be used in baking.
- **Custard, gravies, creamed foods, chopped meats, poultry and seafood sandwich fillings** spoil quickly when unrefrigerated. They are ideal growing places for organisms that can make you sick. Dispose of these foods if they have warmed to over 40 degrees for two hours. Spoilage is hard to detect since they may not smell or taste bad.
- **Commercially made baked goods with cream fillings** are not safe if unrefrigerated. Keep them cold, and eat as quickly as possible.
- **Accidentally frozen canned goods** can present health problems. If they are merely swollen — and you are sure the swelling was caused by freezing — the cans may still be usable. Let the can thaw in the refrigerator before opening it. If the product does not look or smell normal, throw it out. **Do not taste it!** If the seams have rusted or burst, throw the cans out immediately.

REFRIGERATED FOODS

When to save and when to discard:

FOOD	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours	FOOD	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD Fresh or leftover meat, poultry, fish, or seafood	Discard	Fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates	Safe
Thawing meat or poultry	Discard	SAUCES, SPREADS, JAMS Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Discard if above 50 °F for over 8 hrs.
Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken or egg salad	Discard	Peanut butter	Safe
Gravy, stuffing	Discard	White wine Worcestershire sauce	Discard
Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Discard	Fish sauces (oyster sauce)	Discard
Pizza – with any topping	Discard	Hoisin sauce	Discard
Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Discard	Opened vinegar-based dressings	Safe
Canned meats, opened	Discard	Opened creamy-based dressings	Discard
CHEESE Soft Cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, brie, Camembert, colby, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel	Discard	Spaghetti sauce, opened jar	Discard
Hard Cheeses: cheddar, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano	Safe	BREAD, CAKES, COOKIES, PASTA Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads	Safe
Processed Cheeses	Safe	Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Discard
Shredded Cheeses	Discard	Cooked pasta, spaghetti	Discard
Low-fat Cheeses	Discard	Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette	Discard
Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar)	Safe	Fresh pasta	Discard
DAIRY Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt	Discard	Cheesecake	Discard
Butter, margarine	Safe	Breakfast foods – waffles, pancakes, bagels	Safe
Baby formula, opened	Discard	PIES, PASTRY Pastries, cream filled	Discard

EGGS Fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products	Discard	Pies – custard, cheese filled, or chiffon	Discard
Custards and puddings	Discard	Pies, fruit	Safe
CASSEROLES, SOUPS, STEWS	Discard	VEGETABLES Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Safe
FRUITS Fresh fruits, cut	Discard	Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged	Discard
Fruit juices, opened	Safe	Vegetables, raw	Safe
Canned fruits, opened	Safe	Vegetables, cooked	Discard
		Vegetable juice, opened	Discard
		Baked potatoes	Discard
		Commercial garlic in oil	Discard
		Potato Salad	Discard