



Erie County Health Department

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STORM EVENT ADVISORY: WHAT FOOD IS STILL GOOD?

One of the keys to determining which foods are safe to eat after a power loss is knowing at what temperature the food has been kept. Refrigerated foods should be kept below 45°F. If your power has been out for more than a few hours, and a food thermometer isn't available to take some temperatures, here are some general guidelines:

REFRIGERATORS will only keep foods cold for about 4 hours if the power goes out. Check the charts below for what to do with different foods if power is off more than 4 hours.

FREEZERS will keep food frozen for up to two days if fully stocked—a half-full freezer will keep foods frozen for only about one day. If the frozen food still has ice crystals, you can refreeze it. If the foods are mostly or fully thawed, but still cold (under 45°F), you can use them but don't refreeze. If the food is fully thawed and warm, **THROW IT OUT!**

Remember: **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

Foods Okay to Keep

There are foods that some people store in the refrigerator that can also be kept at room temperature for a few days. If any of these foods were in the refrigerator when you lost power, they should be safe :

- Butter, margarine
- Hard cheese
- Whole, fresh fruit (not sliced or cut)
- Fresh vegetables (except raw sprouts)
- Fruit juices
- Dried fruits, coconut
- Fresh herbs & spices
- Open jars of vinegar based dressing (like Italian)
- Peanut butter, jelly
- Condiments like ketchup, mustard, relish
- Taco sauce, hot sauce, barbecue sauce
- Olives
- Fruit pies

If any food is moldy, has a strange appearance or an unusual odor, **THROW IT AWAY!**



Throw These Foods Away!

Some foods from your refrigerator or freezer must stay cold (below 45 °F) to be safe to eat. These foods spoil rapidly, or may contain harmful organisms that will grow quickly at warmer temperatures. If the refrigerator was warm for too long, eating these foods could make you or your family sick. If you lost power, and these foods are above 45°F, throw them away:

- Raw or cooked meat, seafood, or poultry
- Cold cuts, pizza topped with meats
- Stews, soups, casseroles
- Milk, soy milk, cream, yogurt, soft cheese
- Mayonnaise, tartar sauce, creamy dressings
- Cooked pasta, cooked potatoes, cooked rice
- Salads made with pasta, potatoes or rice
- Refrigerated cookie dough
- Fresh eggs, egg substitutes
- Cream-filled pastries
- Custard, chiffon or cream cheese pies
- Gravy
- Ice cream

