

Keeping food safe during an emergency

Did you know that a flood, fire, national disaster, or the loss of power from high winds, snow, or ice could jeopardize the safety of your food? Knowing how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe will help minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Fast Facts

- Always keep meat, poultry, fish, and eggs refrigerated at or below 40 °F and frozen food at or below 0 °F. This may be difficult when the power is out.
- 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) if the door remains closed. Obtain dry or block ice to keep your refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time.
- Digital, dial, or instant-read food thermometers and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food is at safe temperatures. Keep appliance thermometers in the refrigerator and freezer at all times.
- **Never taste food to determine its safety!** You can't rely on appearance or odor to determine whether food is safe.
- Always discard any items in the refrigerator that have come into contact with raw meat juices.
- Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of your food right before you cook or eat it. Throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit (40 °F).

Want to know which specific foods to keep or throw out?

Use [FoodSafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov) food charts to guide you

- www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/refridg_food.html
- www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/emergency-preparedness/keeping-food-safe-during-an-emergency/CT_Index

Program contact

Health Security, Preparedness and Response program

- <http://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/CurrentHazards/Pages/index.aspx>

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