

## Food Safety in a Power Outage

*In case of an emergency, this tip sheet will help you figure out which foods are OK to eat, and how to keep your foods safe longer while the power is out and reduce the risk of foodborne illness. This is meant as a general guide only. If you have any doubt about the safety of any food, **DON'T EAT IT!** You can't rely on appearance or odor to determine if a food is safe.*

### Power's Out! - Now what should I do?

#### Power's Out!

Keep your refrigerator door closed as much as possible to keep the cold air in.

**An unopened fridge will keep food cold for 4 hours.** Make meals out of food from the fridge.

#### 4 Hours

Now, you should throw out any perishable foods in the fridge that have been held above 40°F for more than 2 hours. If coolers and ice are available, food can be kept for longer. But once certain foods reach 40°F, they must be discarded after 2 hours. Start making meals with food remaining in the fridge, coolers, and in the freezer.

#### 24 Hours

Food in a ½ full freezer is now unsafe and must be tossed.

#### 48 Hours

Food in a full freezer is now unsafe and must be tossed. Non-perishable foods are still safe to consume. Try some of the meal and snack ideas provided on the next page.

#### Power's back on!



When the power resumes, any remaining perishable food in the freezer and fridge held above 40°F for more than 2 hours *must be thrown out*. Clean the fridge before refilling with new foods.

Frozen foods can be refrozen if there are still ice crystals on the food, and it feels cold to the touch. Refreezing may alter the texture.

### Perishable Foods to **TOSS** when held above 40°F for more than 2 hours :

Meat and Poultry: Raw meat, leftover cooked meat, soy products (like tofu or veggie burgers), tuna or chicken salad, lunch meats, hot dogs, pizzas with any topping, eggs & egg-based dishes

Dairy: Milk, soft cheeses, shredded cheese, processed cheese, opened soy milk, yogurt, sour cream, buttermilk, opened baby formula

Fruits and Veggies: Fresh cut fruit, leafy greens, potato salad; leftover cooked veggies

Sauces, Soups, and Stews: Leftover stews and soups, opened creamy salad dressings, opened spaghetti sauce; fish sauces (oyster sauce)

Grains: Cooked pasta, rice or potatoes; cream-filled pastry or pie, cheesecake, pasta salads, refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough

### Foods that are Safe to **KEEP** above 40°F:

Dairy: Hard cheeses, processed cheese, grated parmesan; butter, margarine

Fruits and Veggies: Fresh whole fruit, open canned fruit, opened fruit juice, dried fruits, dates, raisins, coconut, fresh mushrooms, herbs, raw vegetables, olives, pickles

Sauces: Opened mayonnaise (but discard if reaches 50° for over 8 hrs), peanut butter, jelly, relish, mustard, ketchup, opened vinegar-based dressings; soy, barbecue and Hoisin sauces

Grains: Bread, tortillas, rolls, muffins, bagels, and fruit pies.

### About SNAP-D in Case of a Disaster

Through the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) FNS is able to offer short-term food assistance benefits in the wake of a disaster. Eligible households receive one month of benefits, equivalent to the maximum amount of benefits normally issued to a SNAP household of their size. D-SNAP allows households to use a simplified application; for more info, please contact the state agency that administers SNAP: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dta/food-assistance.html>

## Be Prepared!

Keep a supply of non-perishable food items in your pantry if possible to be ready for an emergency. Some essential healthy non-perishable food items for an emergency supply include:

- Dried fruits (dates, raisins, dried cranberries, etc)
- Low sodium or no added salt canned vegetables
- Low sodium canned beans
- Jerky (beef or turkey)
- Canned tuna or chicken
- Low sodium canned soups
- Nut butters, nuts, peanuts or sunflower seeds
- Whole wheat crackers and bread
- Whole grain cereals
- Shelf-stable milk or soymilk
- Powdered eggs
- Ready-to-use baby formula

*Remember to also have a hand held can opener handy to open cans and a food thermometer to check temps. A fridge/freezer thermometer is also helpful. **Fridge should be kept at 40°F or less and freezer at 0° or lower.***

## No-Electricity-Required Cooking

During a power outage, you may have none of the usual ways to cook food, and the water supply may be limited.

Here are some tips for safe, no-electricity cooking .

- **Gas Stoves**—are safe to use in a power outage, and do not require electricity
- **Camp Stoves and Charcoal Burners**—are safe to use, but can **ONLY** be used outside. These stoves have toxic fumes, and are not safe for indoor use, even in a fireplace.
- **Fireplaces**—certain foods can be skewered or wrapped in foil to be safely cooked over a fire in a fireplace.
- Consider how much fuel you have available. If the outage is anticipated to last awhile, cooking foods with short cooking times or requiring no cooking may be best to conserve fuel.
- Commercially canned foods are safe to eat directly out of cans with no heating needed.
- If the water supply is unsafe, boil all water to be used in food preparation for at least 10 minutes. Juices from canned products may be retained as a cooking liquid.

For more information on food safety and power outages, check [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov) and [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

## No-Electricity Recipes

(From University of Florida IFAS Extension)

### Southwestern Bean Salad

Drain and rinse 1 can black beans and 1 can corn. Mix beans and corn together. Mix in 3/4 cup of salsa (or also may use diced tomatoes). Spoon onto salad greens and top with 1/4 cup shredded cheese. Garnish with a spoon of sour cream if desired and serve with whole grain crackers or flour tortillas.

### Bean and Veggie Sandwich

Drain, rinse, and mash canned beans (any variety) and mix with low-fat plain yogurt. Add desired spices (such as dill, parsley, onion, garlic or pepper) Spread on multigrain bread and top with lettuce, cucumber, and tomato.

### Tuna Stuffed Tomatoes

Drain a can of tuna and mix with parsley, dill, salt and pepper. Add canned corn to the mixture if desired. Slice the top off a fresh tomato, and scoop out the seeds. Spoon the tuna mixture into the tomato.

### Fruit Salad

Cut up one or more kinds of fresh or canned fruit, such as pineapple, peaches, berries, or bananas. If using canned fruit, drain and rinse off any heavy syrup. Mix fruit with yogurt and top with walnuts or almonds if desired. Serve with whole grain toast.

### Chicken Salad Sandwich

Mix leftover freshly cooked (or canned ) shredded chicken with low-fat mayonnaise. Add chopped celery, chopped bell pepper to taste. Serve on whole grain bread with sliced tomato and lettuce.

### Peanut Butter Banana Roll Ups

Spread creamy or crunchy peanut butter to the edges of a whole wheat tortilla. Arrange sliced bananas over the peanut butter in a single layer. May be topped with a dollop of jam if desired. Fold up the bottom and roll.