

Food Safety in a Storm

How to protect your food if the power goes out



Food Safety & Sanitation

Without electricity or a cold source food stored in refrigerators and freezers can become unsafe. Bacteria in food grow rapidly at temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit and if these foods are consumed you can become very sick. Thawed food usually can be eaten if it is still "refrigerator cold." It can be re-frozen if it still contains ice crystals. Remember, ***"When in doubt, throw it out."***

Do's & Don'ts

- ✗ Eat any food that looks or smells abnormal, even if the can looks normal.
- ✓ Throw away any food that has come into contact with contaminated flood water.
- ✓ Throw away any food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more.
- ✗ Eat foods from cans that are swollen, dented or corroded, even though the product may look safe to eat.
- ✓ Use ready-to-feed formula. If you must mix infant formula use bottled water or boiled water as a last resort.



Your Water Needs

Store at least one gallon of water per person per day for several days for drinking and sanitation. A normally active person needs about three-quarters of a gallon of fluid daily from water and other beverages. However, individual needs vary depending on age, health, physical condition, activity, diet, and climate.

Water Tips

- ✓ **Never ration drinking water unless ordered to do so by authorities.** Drink the amount you need today and try to find more for tomorrow. Minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.
- ✓ **Drink water that you know is not contaminated first.** If necessary, suspicious water, such as cloudy water from regular faucets or water from streams or ponds, can be used after it has been treated. If water treatment is not possible, put off drinking suspicious water as long as possible, but do not become dehydrated.
- ✓ **Do not drink carbonated or caffeinated beverages instead of drinking water.** Caffeinated drinks and alcohol dehydrate the body which increases the need for drinking water.

Managing Food Without Power

To prepare for severe weather with the possibility of power outages, fill a gallon jug of any liquids you need to keep, leaving some room at the top, and place it in the freezer. If the power goes out, this will help keep other items cool.



Make a Plan

- ✓ Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- ✓ The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours if it is unopened.
- ✓ Refrigerated or frozen foods should be kept at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below for proper food storage.
- ✓ Use a refrigerator thermometer to check temperature.
- ✓ Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than four hours.
- ✓ Discard any perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for two hours or more.

Suggested Food Supplies

Following a disaster there may be power outages that could last for several days. Stock canned foods, dry mixes and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water or special preparation. Be sure to include a manual can opener and eating utensils. Consider the following things when putting together your emergency food supplies:

- Store at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Choose foods your family will eat.
- Remember any special dietary needs.

Shopping List



Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables and a can opener

Protein or fruit bars



Dry cereal or granola



Peanut butter

Dried fruit



Canned juices

Non-perishable pasteurized milk

High-energy foods

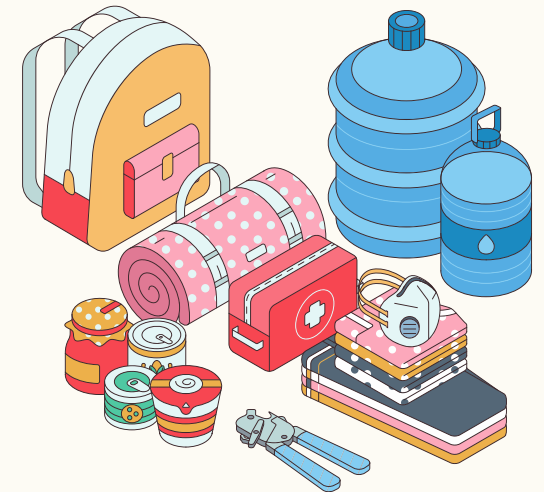


Food for infants

Comfort/stress foods

For More Information

Check out
www.ready.gov/food



More Resources



Carroll County EMA Website



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