

factsheet

Saving Foods When The Power is Off

When the electricity to your refrigerator or freezer is interrupted for an extended period of time, the safety of foods in them becomes a concern. The information in this fact sheet is intended to help you determine the safety of your food.

FROZEN FOOD: When to Save and When to Throw Out

Frozen foods in a fully-stocked freezer will stay frozen up to two days, in a half-filled freezer about one day. Keep the freezer door closed as much as possible. Refer to the following chart to determine if a specific food may be saved or be thrown out.

	Still contains ice crystals and feels as cold as if refrigerated	Thawed, held above 4°C (40°F) for over two hours
Meat, Poultry or Seafood		
Beef, veal, lamb, pork, ground meats	Refreeze	Discard
Poultry, ground poultry	Refreeze	Discard
Variety meats (liver, kidney, heart, Chitterlings)	Refreeze	Discard
Casseroles, stews, soups, convenience foods, pizza	Refreeze	Discard
Fish, shellfish, breaded seafood products	Refreeze <i>(there will be some texture and flavour loss)</i>	Discard
Dairy		
Milk	Refreeze <i>(may lose some texture)</i>	Discard
Eggs (out of shells), egg products	Refreeze	Discard
Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
Soft/semi-soft cheeses (cream cheese, ricotta)	Refreeze <i>(may lose some texture)</i>	Discard
Hard cheeses (cheddar, Swiss, Parmesan)	Refreeze	Refreeze
Casseroles containing milk, cream, eggs, soft cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
Fruits		
Juices	Refreeze	Refreeze <i>(discard if moldy, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops)</i>
Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze <i>(will change in texture or flavour)</i>	
Vegetables		
Juices	Refreeze	Discard after held above 4°C (40°F) for six hours
Home or commercially packaged; blanched	Refreeze <i>(may suffer texture and flavour loss)</i>	
Breads, Pastries		
Bread, rolls, muffin cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese fillings	Refreeze	Discard
Pie crusts	Refreeze	Refreeze
Commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze <i>(may suffer some quality loss)</i>	Refreeze <i>(will suffer considerable quality loss)</i>
Other		
Casseroles – pasta; rice-based	Refreeze	Discard
Flour, cornmeal, nuts	Refreeze	Refreeze

REFRIGERATOR FOOD: When to Save and When to Throw Out

Refrigerated foods will generally stay safe for four to six hours, if the door is kept closed. Refer to the following chart to help you determine if specific foods may be saved or be thrown out.

	Food still cold, held at 40°F or above under two hours	Held above 40°F for over two hours
Meat, Poultry or Seafood		
Fresh or leftover meat, poultry, fish, seafood	Safe	Discard
Thawing meat or poultry	Safe	Discard <i>(if warmer than refrigerator temperatures)</i>
Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, egg salad	Safe	Discard
Gravy, stuffing	Safe	Discard
Lunch meats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Safe	Discard
Pizza ~ meat topped	Safe	Discard
Canned meats (not labeled "Keep Refrigerated") ~ refrigerated after opening	Safe	Discard
Canned hams (labeled "Keep Refrigerated")	Safe	Discard
Casseroles, soups, stews	Safe	Discard
Dairy		
Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt	Safe	Discard
Butter, margarine	Safe	Safe
Baby formula ~ opened	Safe	Discard
Eggs ~ fresh, hard cooked in shell	Safe	Discard
Egg dishes, custards, puddings	Safe	Discard
Hard cheeses, processed cheeses	Safe	Safe
Soft cheeses, cottage cheese	Safe	Discard
Fruits		
Canned fruits	Safe	Safe
Fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates	Safe	Safe
Vegetables		
Vegetables ~ cooked, juice ~ opened	Safe	Discard after six hours
Baked potatoes	Safe	Discard
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Safe	Safe
Garlic ~ chopped in oil or butter	Safe	Discard
Breads, Pastry		
Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins	Safe	Safe
Pastries ~ cream filled	Safe	Discard
Pies ~ custard, cheese filled, chiffons	Safe	Discard
Pies ~ fruit	Safe	Safe
Refrigerated biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Safe	Discard
Other		
Cooked pasta, spaghetti	Safe	Discard
Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinegar base	Safe	Discard
Mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Safe	Discard if above 50°F for over eight hours
Open salad dressing, jelly, relish, barbecue sauce, mustard, catsup, olives	Safe	Safe