



***Caring hands
of public health.***

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September 8, 2014

Food Safety During a Power Outage

This fact sheet provides information on how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe to help minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of foodborne illness during and after a power outage.

Potentially Hazardous Food

- ▶ Potentially Hazardous foods, such as eggs, meat, poultry, fish, dairy, refrigerated leftovers, cooked vegetables, etc., can provide for rapid growth of bacteria that cause food borne illness.
 - This type of food needs to be stored at 41° F or lower to prevent growth of bacteria.

Refrigerated Food

- ▶ Food in refrigerators should be safe for about 4 hours.
- ▶ Do not open the refrigerator door more than absolutely necessary-leave that cold air inside.
- ▶ All potentially hazardous food that is above 41° F for two or more hours should be discarded.
- ▶ Other food that appears to have an unusual odor, color, or texture should be discarded.
- ▶ Never taste food to determine its safety! You can't rely on appearance or odor to determine whether food is safe.

Frozen Food

- ▶ Leave the freezer door closed.
- ▶ A full freezer should keep food safe for about two days, a half full freezer about one day.
- ▶ Add bags of ice or dry ice to the freezer if the power will be off for an extended time.
- ▶ Food that was frozen, and has thawed, but still has ice crystals and is 41° F or lower can be re frozen.

When Power is Restored

- ▶ Check internal temperature of food with a metal stem thermometer, and refrigerate or refreeze.
- ▶ When re-cooling food, separate the packages to cool food more quickly (do not stack packages).
- ▶ Always discard any items in the refrigerator that have come into contact with raw meat juices.
- ▶ Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator and freezer at all times for monitoring temperatures.

To obtain more information about food handling, visit the Oneida County Health Department's Web page at: www.co.oneida.wi.gov, click on the "Public Health" and "Environmental Health".

***Oneida County Health Department will promote and protect the health of
Oneida County by providing leadership, education and services.***