

LAPORTE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Sandra Deausy, M.D., Health Officer

Government Complex
809 State Street, Suite 401 A
LaPorte, Indiana 46350-3385

(219) 326-6808, Ext 2200
Emergency After Hours, Ext 8410
(219) 325-8628, Fax



Tony Mancuso, Administrator

Michigan City Office
302 West 8th Street, Suite 4
Michigan City, Indiana 46360

(219) 874-5611, Ext.7780
(219) 873-3018, Fax

lphealth@laportecounty.org

Food Safety During Power Outages

By following and referencing these helpful tips, you can ensure that your food will remain healthy to eat!

When there is a power outage:

- Note the time the power outage begins.
- Do not place hot food in refrigerators or freezers, this will rapidly raise the temperature inside the refrigerator or freezer causing other foods to become unstable also.

Freezers:

- Leave the freezer door closed! A freezer filled with food should keep food safe for about two days, and a freezer half full of food should keep food safe for about one day.
- You can add bags of ice or dry ice to help maintain proper temperature if the power will be off for extended periods of time.
- Thawed foods can be safely re-frozen as long as they still contain ice crystals and are less than 41°F.

Refrigerators:

- Food in refrigerators should be safe as long as the power is out no more than about four to six hours.
- Leave the door closed as much as possible, when opened, needed cold air escapes allowing your food to cool faster.
- Discard any potentially hazardous food that has been above 41°F for four hours or more, and any non-potentially hazardous food that has reached a temperature of 45°F or higher for any length of time or has unusual odor, color, or texture.



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When in doubt, throw it out:

- If it appears the power will be off for more than six hours, try to keep foods below 41°F to reduce risk of having to discard food.
- Discard these foods if they rise above 41°F for more than four hours or if they exceed 45°F for any length of time: Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, egg substitutes, milk, cream, soft and semi soft cheese, casseroles, stews, soups, lunch meats, hot dogs, creamy based foods, custard, pumpkin or cheese pies, cream-filled pastries, cookie dough made with eggs, whipped butter, cut melons, cooked vegetables
- Save these foods (although food quality may be affected): Butter or margarine, hard and processed cheeses, fresh uncut fruits and vegetables, dried fruits and coconut, opened jars of vinegar-based salad dressings, jelly, relish, taco sauce, barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup, olives, and peanut butter, fruit juices, fresh herbs, spices, fruit pies, bread, rolls, and muffins, cakes except cream cheese frosted or cream-filled, flour, and nuts

When power is restored:

- Identify and discard potentially hazardous foods that may have been above 41°F or below 135°F for four hours or more, or foods that reached above 45°F for any length of time.
- Check the internal food temperatures using a food thermometer and record the temperature.
- If practical separate packages of food in refrigeration units and freezers to allow for faster re-cooling.
- The refreezing of food may affect the quality and should be used within a short period of time.



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