

Food

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.



Suggested Emergency Food Supplies

Consider the following things when putting together your emergency food supplies:

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Choose foods your family will eat.
- Remember any special dietary needs.
- Avoid foods that will make you thirsty.

The following items are suggested when selecting emergency food supplies. You may already have many of these on hand.

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

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 °F, 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. To be safe, remember, “When in doubt, throw it out.”

Do:

- Keep food in covered containers.
- Keep cooking and eating utensils clean.
- Discard any food that has come into contact with contaminated flood water.
- Discard any food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more.
- Discard any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture.
- Use ready-to-feed formula. If you must mix infant formula use bottled water, or boiled as a last resort.

Don't:

- Eat foods from cans that are swollen, dented or corroded, even though the product may look safe to eat.
- Eat any food that looks or smells abnormal, even if the can looks normal.
- Let garbage accumulate inside, both for fire and sanitation reasons.

Cooking

Alternative cooking sources can be used in times of emergency including candle warmers, chafing dishes, fondue pots or a fireplace. Charcoal grills and camp stoves are for outdoor use only. Commercially canned food may be eaten out of the can without warming.

To heat food in a can:

1. Remove the label.
2. Thoroughly wash and disinfect the can. (Use a diluted solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.)
3. Open the can before heating.

Managing Food without Power

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened.

- Refrigerated or frozen foods should be kept at 40° F 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 4 hours.
- Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40° F for two hours or more.

Using Dry Ice:

- Know where you can get dry ice prior to a power outage.
- Twenty-five pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer below freezing for 3-4 days.
- If you use dry ice to keep your food cold, make sure it does not come in direct contact with the food.
- Use care when handling dry ice, wear dry, heavy gloves to avoid injury.

For more information about food safety during an emergency, visit [FoodSafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov).