

Food, even water can spoil when the power goes out

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(HealthDay)—Power outages can be more than an inconvenience. They

can cause problems with your food and water that could put your family's health at risk.

If the power is out for less than four hours, food in your refrigerator and freezer will be safe to eat, but you should keep the appliance doors closed, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says.

If the power is out more than four hours, pack milk and other [dairy products](#), meat, fish, eggs, gravy and spoilable leftovers into a cooler with ice. A freezer that is full will hold food safely for 48 hours, while a half-full freezer will hold food safely for up to 24 hours, the CDC said in a news release. Avoid opening the freezer door.

Before you use any food, check its temperature with a food thermometer. Toss out anything with a temperature above 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Power outages also may cause water purification systems to stop working, the agency warned. If that happens, safe sources of water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene include bottled, boiled or treated water.

Make sure bottled water is from a safe source. If you aren't sure, boil or treat [bottled water](#) before you use it. Boiling water for one minute is the best way to kill harmful bacteria and parasites, the CDC advised.

If necessary, you can use disinfectants such as iodine or chlorine dioxide tablets to make water safer to drink, according to the CDC. Follow package directions.

More information: The American Red Cross has more on [power outage safety](#).

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