

AFTER THE STORM *Food and water*

When in doubt, throw it out

Food

Do NOT depend on smell or taste to determine safety of foods.

Throw out any meats, chicken, seafood or dairy product raw or uncooked that isn't ice-cold.

Use all perishable foods first.

Cook perishable proteins — meats, eggs and poultry — first.

Even cooked meat must stay cold and is good for only three to four days after thawing, and under refrigeration.

What will keep

These foods will keep at least a few weeks without power.

Condiments

Vinaigrette salad dressings — but no creamy ones

Ketchup

Mustard

Relishes, pickles and chutney

Foil packs of mayonnaise

Steak sauces, including Worcestershire, A-1 and HP

Tabasco and any commercially bottled hot sauce made with vinegar

Barbecue sauces

Jellies and jams made with sugar

Cereals and grains

Boxed cereal

Nuts (whole or chopped)

Flours

Seeds

Rice, barley, pastas, oats

Cake mixes

Dry pet foods

Unopened foods

Unopened cans, boxes, jars and pouches are safe **UNLESS** the boxes get wet or cans are dented

Throw out wet or dented boxes and cans.

Other foods that are safe

Peanut butter

Processed cheese or cheese spreads not from the refrigerated case

Hard-cooked eggs in the shell, kept cold, will keep for up to one week

Honey

Most oils (some oils such as sesame, walnut oil or peanut oils may go rancid and taste off in high heat, but they are safe)

Spices (check for weevils; the taste quality will be affected after storage in high heat)

Candied fruits

Sweetened coconut

Chocolate or fruit syrups

Chocolate

Potatoes, carrots, onions and turnips generally will last at room temperatures (but they will rot if wet)

Throw out any raw or cooked meat or dairy that has been sitting at room temperature (70 degrees or above) more than *two hours*.

Keep hands and preparation surfaces clean.

Use baby wipes to keep counters and surfaces clean; water from the tap may contaminate surfaces.

Use only bottled water for washing food, hands, surfaces and utensils.

Use — or lose

A full freezer without power will keep foods frozen for 48 hours. A refrigerator will keep foods safely cold four hours. After that time, you must immediately use or discard these products:

All raw or cooked meats, chicken or seafood

Any cured meats — hot dogs, fully-cooked sausage, lunch meats, ham, bacon (shelf-stable bacon is OK)

Any dairy products and foods that contain them — yogurt, cottage cheese, semi-soft and soft cheeses, grated cheese, milk products (including soy milk).

Use with caution

Frozen fruits or vegetables with no sauces (OK to cook after thawing)

Raw eggs — shells must have no cracks

Water

Don't ration.

Drink as much as you need. Look for more water later.

Use water in tub, pipes, water heater or toilet tank for washing or flushing.

Treat opened bottles of water as food: Open it and use it quickly or chill it.

You can use water in water heater. Turn off power and open spigot at the bottom. Don't reconnect the water heater until you're told the water supply is safe.

If you must purify water

Use 8 drops

nonscented household bleach (1 teaspoon) per gallon of clear water or 16 drops per gallon of cloudy water. Mix thoroughly and let stand 30 minutes.

Water should have a slight chlorine smell; if it doesn't, repeat dose and let stand another 15 minutes.

If you use household (2 percent) tincture of iodine, use 12 drops per gallon.

Don't use the wrong strength!

Food, water and kitchen information compiled by Food Editor Jan Norris.

Important: Foods that are labeled kosher, cured or organic have nothing to do with how long a food lasts. Do NOT use those labels as a safety gauge.