

REFRIGERATED FOODS: When to Save and When To Throw Out

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Meat, Poultry, and Seafood

Type of Product	Food still cold, held at 40° F or above under 2 hours	Held above 40° F for over 2 hours
Fresh or leftover meat, poultry, fish, seafood	Safe	Discard
Thawing meat or poultry	Safe	Discard if warmer than refrigerator temperatures
Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, egg salad	Safe	Discard
Gravy, stuffing	Safe	Discard
Lunch meats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Safe	Discard
Pizza - meat topped	Safe	Discard
Canned meats (not labeled "Keep Refrigerated") - refrigerated after opening	Safe	Discard
Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Safe	Discard
Casseroles, soups, stews	Safe	Discard

Dairy, Eggs, Cheese

Type of Product	Food still cold, held at 40° F or above under 2 hours	Held above 40° F for over 2 hours
Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt	Safe	Discard
Butter, margarine	Safe	Safe
Baby formula - opened	Safe	Discard
Eggs - fresh, hard cooked in shell	Safe	Discard

Eggs dishes, custard, puddings	Safe	Discard
Hard cheeses, processed cheeses (cheddar, Swiss, Parmesan)	Safe	Safe
Soft cheeses, cottage cheese	Safe	Discard

Fruits

Type of Product	Food still cold, held at 40° F or above under 2 hours	Held above 40° F for over 2 hours
Juices - opened	Safe	Safe
Canned - opened	Safe	Safe
Fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates	Safe	Safe

Vegetables

Type of Product	Food still cold, held at 40° F or above under 2 hours	Held above 40° F for over 2 hours
Cooked, juice - opened	Safe	Discard after 6 hours
Baked potatoes	Safe	Discard
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Safe	Safe
Garlic - chopped in oil or butter	Safe	Discard

Pies, Pastries

Type of Product	Food still cold, held at 40° F or above under 2 hours	Held above 40° F for over 2 hours
Pastries - cream filled	Safe	Discard
Pies - custard, cheese filled, chiffons	Safe	Discard
Pies - fruit	Safe	Safe

Bread, Cakes, Cookies, Pasta

Type of Product	Food still cold, held at 40° F or above under 2 hours	Held above 40° F for over 2 hours
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Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads	Safe	Safe
Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Safe	Discard
Cooked pasta, spaghetti	Safe	Discard
Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinegar base	Safe	Discard

Sauces, Spreads, Jams

Type of Product	Food still cold, held at 40° F or above under 2 hours	Held above 40° F for over 2 hours
Mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Safe	Discard if above 50° F for over 8 hours
Peanut butter	Safe	Safe
Opened salad dressing, jelly, relish, taco & barbeque sauce, mustard, catsup, olives	Safe	Safe

How Do I Get Rid of Odors?

Strong food odors may develop as a result of food spoilage during a power failure. Because the refrigerator must be empty and unplugged when cleaning, the best time to fight these odors is before restocking foods. Below are some ideas for removing unwanted odors:

1. Use one of the following solutions to wash the interior walls of the refrigerator. Rinse with water and dry. **Do not combine any two of these household chemicals; toxic fumes, which may be fatal, may result.**
 - Vinegar—one cup per gallon of water
 - Household ammonia—one cup per gallon of water
 - Chlorine bleach—one-half cup per gallon of water
2. Take out all removable parts and wash with mild soap and water.
3. Fill a large shallow container with vinegar. Set in refrigerator several hours. If odor persists, let set two to three days, changing vinegar every eight hours.

4. Try activated charcoal, available at a drug store or pet supply store, to absorb lingering odors. Place the charcoal in large shallow pans or paper in the bottom of the refrigerator. Leave for several days, changing the charcoal every few days. After the odor disappears, rinse and dry the interior before replacing food.
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References:

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“Keeping Food Safe During Emergencies,” CFS-119. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907. <http://persephone.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/Pubs/CFS/CFS-119.html>, 1994.