

NUTRITION NUGGET # 13

Question: How can I keep my food safe during a power outage?

Answer: Be prepared. Know what you can do during and after a power outage. Discard food that has come into contact with flood water.



Facts:

Be Prepared

Before an outage, **set refrigerator temperature below 40°F.**

Freeze bottled water to be keep food cold in case of power outage.

Keep non-perishable foods on shelves away from water in case of flooding: cereal, crackers, trail mix, dry and canned fruits, canned vegetables, single-serve milk, canned beans, tuna, peanut butter.

What to do during and after

Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed during the outage.

If doors stay closed, a full freezer will stay safe for up to 2 days.

If bottled water is not available, boil water before drinking.

When power comes back, **check the temperature** of your refrigerator and freezer with a thermometer:

Throw away meats, eggs, leftovers, and dairy above 40°F for more than 2 hours. Refreeze or cook food below 40°F

Government websites can help you find meals or extended food stamp benefits if you have been affected by a natural disaster.

Call **311** or go to **nyc.gov** to find free food distribution centers in NYC.

How to deal with flooding

Throw away food and containers that came into contact with flood water: milk cartons, dented cans, snap-lid, screw-cap containers.

If your kitchen comes into contact with flood water, wash and sanitize all surfaces, kitchen equipment, dishes, and utensils.

Make a sanitizing solution: mix 1 tablespoon of unscented bleach for every gallon of clean water. Wear protective gloves!

Apply: A participant affected by a power outage wants to know how to prepare meals safely or find meals. What advice can you give her?

References: Food Safety in the Home After a Hurricane and/of Flood. HomeFoodSafety.org. <http://homefoodsafety.org/alerts/flooding>. Accessed November 14, 2012. What Consumers Need to Know About Food and Water Safety During Hurricanes, Power Outages, and Floods. US Food and Drug Administration. <http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm076881.htm>. Accessed November 12, 2012. Locations where prepared food is available. NYC.gov. http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/hot_food.html. Accessed November 19, 2012. **Photo:** <http://www.thekitchn.com/sandy-aftermath-usda-guidelines-for-telling-if-food-is-safe-after-an-outage-food-news-179576>