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What to do with food during and After a Power Outages

The Hasbrouck Heights Board of Health would like to remind residences the basic tips for keeping food safe during power outages

Perishable food such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk, and eggs that are not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked. If the power in a refrigerator goes out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will keep the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed. Buy dry or block ice to keep the refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time.

Once the power is on, determine the safety of your food. Check each package of food to determine its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40 F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook. Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40 F for two hours or more

Find more information on food disaster planning and other topics; go to the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, Food and Drug Safety Program Website at: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/foodanddrugsafety/consumer.shtml> or call 609-826-4935.