

FACT SHEET

Determining Which Foods to Use or Discard During an Emergency

REFRIGERATOR FOOD: When to Save and When to Throw Out

Refrigerated foods will generally stay safe for four to six hours, if the door is kept closed. Refer to the following chart to help you determine if specific foods may be saved or be thrown out.

	Food still cold, held at 40°F or above under two hours	Food still cold, held at 40°F or above over two hours
Meat, Poultry or Seafood		
Fresh or leftover meat, poultry, fish, seafood	Safe	Discard
Thawing meat or poultry	Safe	Discard (if warmer than refrigerator temperature)
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		
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
Egg dishes, custards, puddings	Safe	Discard
Hard cheeses, processed cheeses	Safe	Safe
Soft cheeses, cottage cheese	Safe	Discard
Fruits		
Canned fruits	Safe	Safe
Fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates	Safe	Safe
Vegetables		
Vegetables ~ cooked, juice ~ opened	Safe	Discard after six hours
Baked potatoes	Safe	Discard
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices	Safe	Safe
Garlic ~ chopped in oil or butter	Safe	Discard
Breads, Pastries		
Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins	Safe	Safe
Pastries ~ cream filled	Safe	Discard
Pies ~ custard, cheese filled, chiffons	Safe	Discard
Pies ~ fruit	Safe	Safe
Refrigerated biscuits, rolls, cookie dough	Safe	Safe
Other		
Cooked pasta, spaghetti	Safe	Discard
Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinegar base	Safe	Discard
Mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Safe	Discard if above 50°F for over eight hours
Open salad dressing, jelly, relish, barbecue sauce, mustard, catsup, olives	Safe	Safe

Reference: Chart courtesy of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries



For more information, please call the Health ACTION Line at **1-800-660-5853** or visit our website at **www.healthunit.org**