



## PREPARE FOR A POWER OUTAGE

with material adapted from a series of social media posts that the Food Policy Council of Buffalo and Erie County launched in the summer of 2023.

# Resources

Each bullet-point links to a separate website. Click on the text to be taken to the website.

- [Food Policy Council's Prepare Your Pantry brochure](#)
- [Food Safety During a Disaster or Emergency webpage](#)
  - [Prepare for an emergency](#)
  - [During an emergency](#)
  - [After an emergency](#)
- [Food Safety During a Power Outage](#)
- [Ready.gov's Food page \(suggested supplies\)](#)
- [United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service's webpage for Disaster SNAP benefits \(also called D-SNAP\)](#)
- [D-SNAP page for New York State](#)
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)'s Infant and Young Children Feeding in Emergencies Toolkit](#)
- [US Department of Health and Human Services- formula alternatives for children over 6 months](#) (note, these should only be used in emergency situations)

Do you have enough food to get you through a power outage? Nonperishable canned food, and bottled water are a few key items to keep on hand. Any uncut fresh fruit and vegetables that you have are normally safe to after the power outage. It will be important to inspect them. View other important steps to take as you and your family prepare for a power outage on the next page.



Items to have as part of emergency preparedness: beans, rice, tuna, pet food, can and can opener, bread, water bottles and juice boxes, and any fruit or vegetables that you let ripen outside of the fridge (e.g., bananas, tomatoes or apples).

Keep some extra ice in the freezer. This will help items stay cold for longer if the power goes out. Buy a thermometer for your refrigerator. These can be purchased for under \$10 at super-center stores.



Learn about resources that might be available. These include government programs, community based organizations, and home owner's/renter's insurance policies.

If the power outage only affects a few households, you might be able to get more ice or dry ice. Find places that sell these products now.



As you prepare for a power outage, think about how you can feed young children and babies. If you normally provide breastmilk, continue doing so during the power outage. If possible, keep 10-14 days of extra formula on hand. However, this is not possible for a lot of families. If you can, talk to your doctor or pediatrician at your next appointment.



Explain your circumstances and ask how you can best prepare to feed your baby in a possible multiday power outage where you could run out of formula. Ask about how to handle a situation when you may not have access to clean drinking water. The advice you receive will be based on baby's age and needs.



Electrolyte solutions might be suggested to keep baby or other family members hydrated, but these will not provide other important nutritional benefits.

Consider any soft food or baby food needs your child or children have. If you make your own baby food, do you use a method that requires power? What backup or alternatives can you use instead? A Foley food mill is one alternative to an electric food processor.

Read more about preparing to feed baby during an emergency by visiting the resources on page 2.





When you lose electricity, it's important to **keep the refrigerator and freezer closed** as much as possible. If you have extra ice and a cooler, consider moving frequently used items into it. Keep track of the time the items have been in the cooler, and the temperature. If it's winter, you can move the snow or ice into the fridge in containers. Food should not be stored outside.



If you lose power for days, cooking may not be possible. Soups and canned vegetables can be eaten without cooking. If you run out of water or baby formula, and can't get more, rehydration solutions with electrolytes can be given temporarily.





You might be tempted to do some cooking. Remember that cooking with a properly vented wood stove or fire place is ok, but grills, hibachis and camp stoves can only be used outside.

Grill being used outside and a safe distance from buildings.



Person with glasses and in a scarf, sweater and slippers enjoying a fire. Fireplace has been properly vented and cleaned.



After the power comes back, it is important to take the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer. If the refrigerator was above 40°F (4°C), some items will need to be thrown away. These include meats, milk, and certain breads, cheeses and frozen items. Most fresh UNCUT fruits and vegetables will be ok. Look for bruises or other bad spots before eating. Since eggs are washed and sold as refrigerated items in America, they cannot be kept if the refrigerator is above 40°F (4°C). View a full list of items that can be kept, and those that should be thrown away at the link on page 2.

## When the refrigerator is above 40°F/4°C:

### Things to inspect



### Things to throw away



Call the resources you bookmarked earlier to find out what is available financially. Be sure to take some time to restock the supplies you used. Purchase supplies over the next few shopping trips.



Check the expiration date on your items at least twice a year. Restock the items that are almost expired. By purchasing food that your family likes, you can add the items that are almost expired to your pantry so they don't go to waste.