

**HEALTH MATTERS**

**FOOD HYGIENE PART 3**

This is our last article on food hygiene and I hope you have found them useful.  Following these simple rules is a good way to keep your family as healthy as possible especially as the weather turns warmer.  We love the warm weather but unfortunately so do the bugs.

**Refrigeration Tips**

* Keep your fridge between 0 °C and 5°C.
* Marinate food in the refrigerator. Bacteria can multiply rapidly in foods left to marinate at room temperature. Also, never reuse marinating liquid as a sauce unless you bring it to a rapid boil first.
* Clean the refrigerator regularly and wipe spills immediately. This helps reduce the growth of bacteria and prevents drips from thawing meat spreading bacteria from one food to another. Clean the fridge out frequently.
* Keep foods covered. Store refrigerated foods in covered containers or sealed storage bags, and check leftovers daily for spoilage. Store eggs in their carton in the refrigerator itself rather than on the door, where the temperature is warmer.
* Don’t eat any foods that have passed their **use-by date**, even if they look fine. They may not be safe to eat. You can generally eat food after its **best before date** (except eggs).

**Freezer Facts**

* Food that is properly frozen and cooked is safe. Food that is properly handled and stored in the freezer at -18° C will remain safe. While freezing does not kill most bacteria, it does stop bacteria from growing. Though food will be safe indefinitely at -18° C, quality will decrease the longer the food is in the freezer. Tenderness, flavour, aroma, juiciness, and colour can all be affected. Leftovers should be stored in tight containers. With commercially frozen foods, it's important to follow the cooking instructions on the package to ensure safety.
* Freezing does not reduce nutrients. There is also little change in a food's protein value during freezing.
* Freezer burn does not mean food is unsafe. Freezer burn is a food-quality issue, not a food safety one. It appears as grey or brown leathery spots on frozen food. It can occur when food is not securely wrapped in air-tight packaging, and causes dry spots in foods.
* Refrigerator/freezer thermometers should be monitored. Check the freezer temperature regularly - at least once a week.

**If You Lose Electricity**

If you lose electricity, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Your refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours if it's unopened. A full freezer will keep an adequate temperature for about 48 hours if the door remains closed.

**Once Power is Restored…**

You'll need to determine the safety of your food. Here's how:

* If a thermometer was kept in the freezer, check the temperature when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 4°C or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.
* If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, 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 4°C or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook. Discard any items in the freezer that have come into contact with raw meat juices.
* Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was not off for more than four hours and the refrigerator door was kept shut. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 4°C for two hours or more.

**Tips for Non-Refrigerated Items**

* Check canned goods for damage. Can damage is shown by swelling, leakage, punctures, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing or denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener. Stickiness on the outside of cans may indicate a leak. Newly purchased cans that appear to be leaking should be returned to the store for a refund or exchange. Otherwise, throw the cans away.
* Don't store food, such as potatoes and onions, under the sink. Leakage from the pipes can damage the food. Store potatoes and onions in a cool, dry place.
* Keep food away from poisons. Don't store foods near household cleaning products and chemicals.
* Keep all your cleaning products and anything that could be dangerous in the same containers it came in.  Never store non food products in food or drink packaging.

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