

Be A Step Ahead – Prepare for Kansas Weather!

Shopper's Article for 10-18-2016. Submitted by Barbara Roths, Family Consumer Sciences Agent, Butler County Extension Office

Kansas may not have hurricanes, but we can claim tornadoes, floods, ice storms, and blizzards. When your power goes out after a storm, do you know long food will stay safe in your refrigerator or in your freezer? What foods will be safe to use? Here are the basics to know – to be a STEP AHEAD of disaster and to respond if power does go out.

- **What can I do ahead of a power outage? Put thermometers in each refrigerator and freezer unit.** Know where to buy ice/dry ice, if needed. Keep some food items in your cupboard that you can open (without an electric can opener!) and eat safely. Canned foods, such as fish, chicken, beans, fruits work well. Meats in pouches are another idea. Crackers and dry cereal can be tasty when you're stuck at home!
- **What can I do with refrigerated food when a power outage happens?** If possible, within four hours, add ice/dry ice to the refrigerator. When your refrigerator has been without power for 4 hours AND your food has not been on ice, check your refrigerator thermometer. If it's reading more than 40F, there are a number of foods that are not safe to keep. These foods include:
 - **meat, poultry, fish, and eggs
 - **luncheon meat and hot dogs
 - **casseroles, soups, and pizza
 - **milk, yogurt, sour cream, and soft cheeses
 - **cooked or cut/peeled fruits and vegetables

Discard any foods such as bread or fresh vegetables that may have been contaminated by juices dripping from raw meat, poultry, or fish.

- **What about frozen foods?** A freezer thermometer should normally read 0F. After a power outage, check your freezer thermometer for a reading of at least 40F or below. Add ice/dry ice to the freezer to keep the temperature below 40F. At 40F, you can safely refreeze frozen foods that have thawed, but still contain ice crystals. However, the QUALITY (taste, texture) of the food will suffer.
- **“When in doubt, throw it out.”** You should NEVER taste this food to determine if it is safe to eat. You could get sick from consuming potentially contaminated food. And even if food does taste okay, it could still make you sick. If you notice that the food has an unusual color, odor, or texture, throw it out. It very likely contains organisms that can make you sick. We don't want to waste food, but the cost of throwing away questionable food is far less than the cost of someone getting sick or possibly dying from eating contaminated food.

Preserving Venison Safely –*Fall hunting season is quickly approaching! Here are some tips on preserving venison from Karen Blakeslee, Rapid Response Center, Kansas State University --*

Venison offers variety and an unusual flavor to the fall and winter table. When handled properly, it can make an excellent meat. It can be refrigerated, frozen as meat cuts or sausage, or preserved by canning, curing, or drying. Decide which method is best for your family --

Dry Meat Safely at Home -- www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3173.pdf

Resources for Home Preserving Venison -- <http://nchfp.uga.edu/tips/fall/venison.html>

How-to Videos for Canning Meat—Pressure Canning –

www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/videos.html

Call Barb at the Butler County Extension Office: 316 -321-9660 or email at broths@ksu.edu for more tips on tasty, healthy and safe foods.