

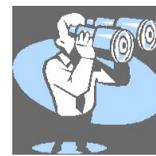


The Englewood Health Watch

El Observador de Salud de Englewood

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Keeping Food Safe During a Power Outage

Sooner or later, homeowners will experience a power outage. For some, it could come after a winter blizzard or a summer storm, but whatever the cause, dealing with food involved can be a challenge.

The food items of concern are those that are potentially hazardous foods. Generally, PHF's are moist, perishable foods in and on which bacteria can grow most easily during the time when the food is held in the temperature danger zone (41°F to 135°F). To help you preserve as much food as possible, here are some guidelines from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

NOTE: A power outage of less than 2 hours is not considered hazardous to food that is held under safe conditions when the outage begins.

FOR YOUR FREEZER:

If your freezer is not full, now is the time to fill it! Use freezer safe containers, and/or freezer gels or packs to freeze water to take up the empty space. This will help your freezer run more efficiently. If you have an upright freezer, store your more expensive items – meats, frozen entrees, etc. on the bottom shelves. Since cold air is heavier than warm air, it will sink to the bottom and keep food stored there colder.

FOR YOUR REFRIGERATOR:

In general, refrigerated items should be safe as long as the power is out no more than four hours. Discard any perishable foods such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk/cheeses, soups/stews, and cream-filled pastries that have been about 40°F for more than 2 hours, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, texture, or feels warm to the touch.

REMEMBER, IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT ABOUT A FOOD'S SAFETY, THROW IT OUT! IT'S NOT WORTH THE RISK.

Limits to Leftovers

In today's time, Americans are stretching every dollar and many consumers are making decisions to have their money count for more these days. People are skipping on dining out by preparing more meals at home and saving leftovers. It is essential that people follow safe food handling practices to prevent cross contamination or getting sick. Below is a list of ways to make sure you fight bacteria growth in foods, which includes discarding refrigerated leftover food within 3 to 4 days. When heating and storing leftovers:

* Always wash hands with soap and running, warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food.

* Temperatures between 41°F and 135°F are considered the "Danger Zone" which allows bacteria to grow rapidly. Always refrigerate cooked leftovers promptly – within 2 hours; 1 hour when the temperatures are over 90°F. Use an appliance thermometer to ensure that your refrigerator is maintained at 41°F or below.

* Divide leftovers into smaller portions and store in shallow containers in the refrigerator. Hot food can be placed directly in the refrigerator.

* Leftovers should be reheated to an internal temperature of at least 165°F. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature. Sauces, soups, and gravies should be reheated by bringing them to a boil.

* When microwaving leftovers, make sure there are no cold spots in food (where bacteria can survive). Cover food, stir, and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking.

REMEMBER – Buying food in bulk can be a money-saver. Whatever the quantity of food – safe handling is a must! Large packages of perishable food, like raw ground meat and poultry products, can be refrigerated for 1-2 days, but then the food should be cooked or put in the freezer.

Source: www.fightbac.org

"Spring is in the Air"

It may not feel like it, but spring isn't that far away. As we approach spring, many animals are entering the mating season, with their young to be born in the spring. As this occurs, they will be looking for likely spots to serve as a home. This is when unwanted inter-action happens between people and wildlife. A shed with a broken window, a garage door which doesn't close properly, or a deck that is open underneath are all very appealing to the expectant mother. Additionally, sloppy garbage cans and pet food left outside are ideal food sources which will also draw wildlife. Wild animals with young are very defensive. You can avoid an unwanted confrontation with wildlife by looking over your yard to make sure you haven't mistakenly put out the welcome mat to our wild neighbors. For more information, contact Matt Traudt at (201) 871-6517.

5 Amazing Allergy Facts

SENSITIVE TO POLLEN? Wash your hair before bedtime. This will keep the pollen from settling on your pillows and bedding. Also, try to avoid tobacco smoke, hairspray and perfume. Remember to wash your hands frequently.

ANTI-HISTAMINE: This helps to block allergic reactions. The best time to take an antihistamine is before the symptoms start. Sleepiness can be caused by some allergy medications. Ask your healthcare provider about allergy medicines that do not cause drowsiness.

DUST MITES: Love to nest in your rugs and make you sneeze and itch. Place your area rugs outside in direct sunlight for several hours. The mites dry up and die.

MOVING: Another location is not a guarantee of allergy relief. Many times people develop allergies to their new surroundings. Keep in mind that most allergy-provoking grasses are widespread throughout the world.

FOOD ALLERGY: As many as 20% of Americans believe they have a food allergy. Food allergies are actually rare. Some of the signs that people consider food allergies are digestive problems, food poisoning or even stress.

Controlling Childhood Asthma

One of the most common childhood diseases is asthma. More than 6million children have a diagnosis of asthma by the age of 18. Asthma is a chronic, inflammatory disease of the airways that causes the normal functioning of the airways to overreact. The excess production of mucus, swelling and airway muscle contraction is caused by inflammation. These changes produce temporary airway obstruction, chest tightness, coughing and wheezing.

In some cases, asthma causes low blood oxygen and even death. If the patient or caregivers are aware of warning signs, asthma can be controlled. Early warning signs include coughing, chest tightness, feeling tired or worn out, rapid breathing and wheezing. Keep in mind that there are times that wheezing can only be heard with a stethoscope. Medications for asthma include quick-acting, inhaled medications. They are often referred to as “puffers” or rescue medications and work quickly by opening tightened breathing passages and relaxing the airway muscles. These quick-acting inhalers only last for a short time.

Long-term medications are sometimes needed to help manage asthma. Long-term medications can be administered through inhalers or taken orally and should be taken daily or as prescribed by the doctor. Another important thing to consider is a written asthma management plan. Make a list of the “triggers” or symptoms for your child.

Also the child’s medicine should be included in this plan. Remember the environment can affect asthma. Here are some suggestions to make a setting safe and healthy for a child with asthma. Wipe surfaces and floor with a damp cloth instead of sprays. Vacuum when children are not present. Keep clutter in closets or closed boxes to prevent dust accumulation.

Smoking of any kind should never be allowed. Use exhaust fans in bathrooms, kitchens and basement areas to reduce humidity and mold growth. Do not allow furred or feathered pets in a childcare setting. Curtains, drapes and fabric need to be vacuumed often. Do not allow children to nap on or lie on carpet or area rugs. For more information, please contact the public health nursing unit of the Englewood Health Department at 201-871-6511.

National Nutrition Month

The theme for March 2009 is “Eat Right”. National Nutrition Month is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing good eating and physical activity habits. Registered Dietitian Day, also celebrated in March, increases awareness of registered dietitians as the indispensable providers of food and nutrition services and recognizes RDs for their commitment to helping people enjoy healthy lives.

The *MyPyramid* symbol represents the recommended proportion of foods from each food group and focuses on the importance of making smart food choices in every food group, every day. Physical activity is a new element in the symbol.

A healthy eating plan:

*Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.

*Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts.

*Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium) and added sugars.

Sources: 2009 American Dietetic Association (ADA); <http://www.eatright.org>; United States Department of Agriculture; <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>

National Infant Immunization Week

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrate the achievement of immunization programs in promoting healthy communities. This year, NIIW will be held April 19-26. Vaccination plays a critical role in safeguarding public health globally. During NIIW 2009, hundreds of communities across the United States will join those in the Western Hemisphere and Europe to celebrate Vaccination Week in the Americas and European Immunization Week.

Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases. Because of the success of vaccines in preventing disease in the United States, parents are often unaware that their children are at risk for so many serious and life-threatening diseases.

Vaccine-preventable diseases are at an all-time low in the United States. However, these diseases still exist, and continued vaccination is necessary to protect everyone from potential outbreaks. Vaccines not only prevent disease, they reduce the costs associated with missed time from work, doctor visits, and hospitalizations. Infants are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases; that is why it is critical to protect them through immunization. Each day, nearly 12,000 babies are born in the United States who will need to be immunized against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases before age two.

Source: Eastern Idaho Public Health District, <http://www2.state.id.us>