Fridge and freezer: keep or toss

When in doubt, throw it out. Never taste food to decide if it's safe.[1]

1. **Keep the doors closed.** A closed fridge keeps food safe for up to 4 hours. A full freezer holds about 48 hours (24 hours if half full).[1]
2. **Over 4 hours?** Move fridge food to a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs, enough to hold 40 °F or below.[1]
3. **Check the thermometer.** Safe means fridge 40 °F or below, freezer 0 °F or below.[1]
4. **Toss after 4 hours without power:** meat, poultry, fish, eggs, lunch meat, hot dogs, leftovers, casseroles, soups, pizza, milk, cream, yogurt, soft cheeses, cut fruit and vegetables, cooked vegetables, opened juices, creamy dressings, batters and doughs, cream pies and pastries, garlic in oil.[1]
5. **Thawed frozen food** that still has ice crystals, or stayed at 40 °F or below, can be refrozen. The quality may suffer.[1]
6. **Flood water:** toss any food that may have touched it, unless it was in a waterproof container. Toss damaged cans, and a fridge or freezer that was under water, even partly.[1]
7. **Fire:** toss all food that was near a fire, including food in cans, jars, and the fridge.[1]

Don't: judge by smell or taste. When in doubt, throw it out.[1]

Stay-Go Guide · official steps, checked 16 November 2026 · Follow your local officials first.

Sources

1. USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service: Keep Your Food Safe During Emergencies

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