HOW LONG DOES FOOD LAST IN THE FRIDGE AND FREEZER WITHOUT POWER?

A closed refrigerator keeps food cold for about four hours, and a full freezer holds its temperature for about 48 hours, according to Ready.gov. Use a thermometer, and throw away food held at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or higher for two hours or more.

THE STEPS

01 Keep the doors closed as much as possible.

02 Keep a thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer so you can read the real temperature.

03 Throw away food that has been at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or higher for two hours or more.

04 When in doubt, throw it out.

05 If the outage lasts more than a day, discard refrigerated medication unless the label says otherwise.

THE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Appliance thermometer in the fridge and freezer
- ☐ Shelf-stable food that needs no cooking
- ☐ A cooler and ice for a long outage

Sources: Ready.gov, Power Outages. Last reviewed November 17, 2026. General planning information, not medical, legal or financial advice.