

Food in Emergencies

What to store, what is safe after a power cut, and how to feed babies safely.

What to store (at least 3 days, 2 weeks if possible)

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| ☐ Canned meat, fish, beans | ☐ Powdered or long-life milk |
| ☐ Canned fruit and vegetables | ☐ Sugar, salt, oil |
| ☐ Peanut butter, nuts | ☐ Baby food and formula if needed |
| ☐ Crackers, biscuits, bread | ☐ Food for special diets |
| ☐ Dried fruit | ☐ Manual can opener |
| ☐ Rice, pasta, oats (if you can cook) | ☐ Pet food |

TIP Choose food your family already eats and that needs little water or cooking. Use the oldest first and replace it.

After a power cut

Keep doors closed. Food stays safe for about:	
Refrigerator (closed)	4 hours
Full freezer (closed)	48 hours
Half-full freezer (closed)	24 hours

- Throw away meat, fish, milk, eggs and leftovers that have been above 4 °C for more than 2 hours.
- Throw away cans that are swollen, leaking, deeply dented or rusty.
- Throw away food that touched flood water, unless it is in undamaged commercial cans (wash and disinfect the can first).
- When in doubt, throw it out. Never taste food to check if it is safe.

Feeding babies and young children

- Breastfeeding is the safest way to feed a baby in an emergency. It protects against infection and needs no water or fuel. Keep breastfeeding; stress does not usually stop milk.
- Mothers who are breastfeeding need extra water and food, and support.
- If a baby needs formula: ready-to-feed liquid is safest. With powder, use water boiled and cooled for no more than 30 minutes (still hot, at least 70 °C), and prepare each feed fresh.
- Use a clean cup instead of a bottle. Cups are easier to clean.
- Ask health or nutrition workers for help. Do not accept or share donated formula without their guidance.

Special diets

Plan ahead for diabetes, allergies, kidney disease, elderly people and anyone who cannot chew. Keep medicines with food that suits them.

Wild food

DANGER Never eat a wild plant or mushroom unless you are 100% certain what it is. Many deadly plants look like safe ones.



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Sources:

- USDA FSIS: Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency (fsis.usda.gov)
- IFE Core Group / WHO / UNICEF: Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies
- Ready.gov / FEMA: Build a Kit, Make a Plan (ready.gov)

Important: General information only. Not a substitute for trained medical help or official instructions. Always follow local authorities and emergency services.

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