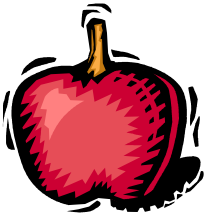


From the Broward County Extension Education Division Service Family and Consumer Sciences



Frequently Asked Food Safety Questions



How long will food remain frozen if the power goes off?

Food stays frozen longer if the freezer remains unopened, is full, is in a cool place and is well insulated. Usually food in a loaded freezer will stay frozen for two to four days, depending on its size. A half-filled freezer will keep food frozen only about 24 hours. Cover the freezer with blankets, keeping them away from the compressor, to help hold the cold. When in doubt, throw suspicious foods out.

How do you prevent fruit from turning brown during freezing?

There are several ways to prevent the darkening of fruit: Use pure ascorbic acid or ascorbic acid mixtures. Citric acid or lemon juice may sometimes be used but are not as effective as ascorbic acid. Some fruits which are to be cooked before serving may also be steamed to prevent browning.

Is it necessary to thaw meat or fish before cooking?

No, meat and fish can be cooked from the frozen stage if extra cooking time is allowed. The amount of time will depend on the size and shape of the cut. Large frozen roasts can take as much as 1½ times as long to cook as unfrozen food of the same weight and shape. Small roasts and thin cuts such as steaks and chops require less cooking time.

Can stuffed turkey be frozen?

Stuffing should be frozen separately from the turkey. With any food, the time needed for freezing to take place in the center of the item is the critical factor.

Can food be refrozen if it has been thawed?

Foods which have partially thawed and still have ice crystals in the package can be safely refrozen, though quality may be poorer. Meat, fish, poultry, prepared foods, vegetables and fruits can be refrozen if the freezer temperature is 40°F or below, and if color and odor are good. However, their quality will be poorer. When in doubt, throw it out.

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- **Why is it important to take time to store food the right way?**
Proper storage keeps food tasting fresh longer. It also slows down the growth of bacteria that makes food spoil or unsafe to eat.
- **How do I know if I have food poisoning?**
If you or a family member develop nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or stomach cramps, you could have food poisoning. Symptoms can appear anywhere from 30 minutes to two weeks later. Most people get sick within 4 to 48 hours after eating bad food. It's best to contact your doctor or go to a hospital right away, if you suspect food poisoning.

For more information see:

- USFDA/CFSAN
www.foodsafety.gov
- USDA
www.nal.usda.gov
- First Gov. The U.S.
government's official website.
www.firstgov.gov
- Fight Bac
www.fightbac.org
- UF/IFAS
<http://foodsafety.ifas.ufl.edu>



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