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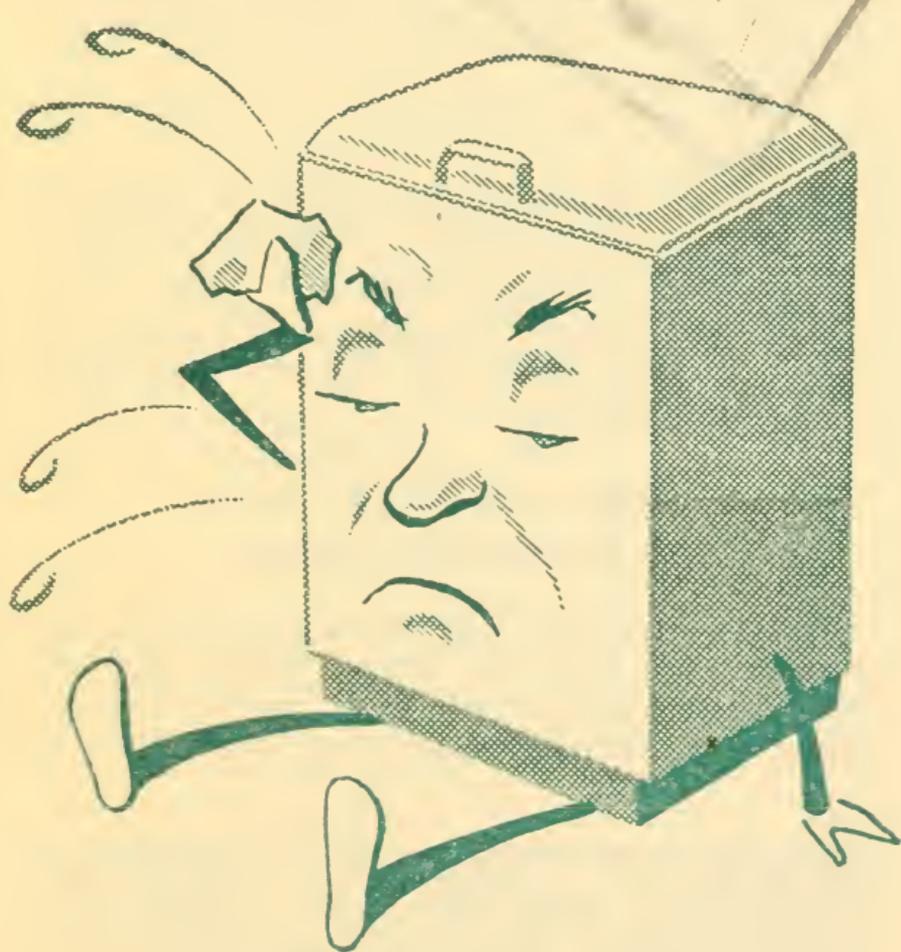
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What To Do

WHEN YOUR HOME FREEZER STOPS

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EXTENSION SERVICE

IF YOUR HOME FREEZER STOPS RUNNING and will be off for some time, you can take several steps to keep food from spoiling.

Keep the freezer closed.

Move the food to a locker plant.

Add dry ice if you can get it. To prevent burns, wear gloves when you handle dry ice.

Can the food if necessary.

Keep Freezer Closed

Open the freezer only to take out the food for moving to a locker plant, or to add dry ice.

Estimate How Long Current Will Be Off

Don't worry if you know you can have the freezer running again in a few hours.

When the freezer stops running, the power supply may be off or the freezer itself may be out of order.

1. Try to find how long the power will be off.
2. Consult the instruction book to determine if there is something you can do to put the freezer back into operation. Or—
3. Try to find out how long it will take to get a serviceman to put the freezer back in running order.

Estimate How Long Food Will Keep

Try to estimate about how long the food will stay frozen. With the freezer closed, food will usually stay frozen in a fully loaded cabinet 2 days; in a cabinet with less than half a load, not



more than a day. Tests in a warm room show that after the freezer stops running—

Food in well-filled, well-insulated 4-cubic-foot home freezers will not begin to spoil in less than 3 days.

Food in well-filled, well-insulated 12- to 36-cubic-foot home freezers will not begin to spoil in less than 5 days.

How long the food in your freezer will stay frozen depends on—

1. The amount of food in the freezer.
A full freezer will stay cold many hours longer than a freezer only a quarter full.
2. The kind of food.
A freezer full of meat will not warm up so fast as a freezer full of baked food.
3. The temperature of the food.
The colder the food, the longer it will stay frozen.
4. The freezer itself.
A well-insulated freezer will keep food frozen much longer than one with little insulation.
5. Size of freezer.
The larger the freezer, the longer the food will stay frozen.

Consider the Freezer-Locker Plant

Make arrangements well in advance with your local locker plant to take care of food in an emergency. Then, if an emergency occurs:

1. Call the locker plant to see if it is operating and, if so, whether it has room for your food. If space is available—
2. Wrap the food in plenty of newspapers and blankets, or use insulated boxes.
3. Rush the food to the locker plant.

Use Dry Ice If You Can Get It

If locker space is not available and it looks as though the freezer would be stopped for longer than a day, use dry ice if you can get it. The more dry ice you use, the longer the food will keep frozen. Fifty pounds will keep the temperature down to 15° F. for about 2 days in an average-size freezer. You may be able to buy dry ice from a local dairy or a cold-storage warehouse.

Move any food from the freezing compartment to the storage compartment of the freezer. Put heavy cardboard directly on the packages of frozen food and then put the dry ice on top of the cardboard.

Should You Cover the Freezer With Blankets?

If you have put dry ice into the cabinet, you may cover the freezer with blankets, quilts, or some other covering. It will help to put crumpled newspaper or excelsior between the cabinet and the blankets.

If you put blankets or other coverings on the freezer, be sure to pin or fasten them so that they will not cover the air-vent openings. The power may go on unexpectedly and ventilation will be needed.

What Should You Do With Food If It Thaws?

You can refreeze thawed fruits.

Fruits usually ferment when they start to spoil. A little fermentation will not make fruits dangerous to eat, but it may spoil their flavor. So you can refreeze thawed fruits if they still taste and smell good. Or you can use them in cooking and baking or for making jams, jellies, and preserves.

Be careful when you refreeze thawed meats and poultry.

Meats and poultry become unsafe to eat when they start to spoil. Therefore, examine each package of food before you decide what to do



POULTRY AND MEAT

CAUTION



with it. If the food still contains some ice crystals, it may safely be refrozen, even though the quality may suffer. It is often wiser to eat food that is completely thawed than to refreeze it. Be sure to cook it thoroughly, however. If the odor of thawed food is poor or questionable, get rid of the food. It may be dangerous!

Be careful when you refreeze vegetables, shellfish, and cooked foods.

Often, you can't tell by the odor whether vegetables, shellfish, and cooked foods have spoiled. Bacteria multiply rapidly in these foods, even at 50° F. So don't refreeze any of these foods when they have thawed completely. If ice crystals are still in the food, you can refreeze it immediately. Usually it is safe to do so, even though the quality may suffer. If the condition of the food is poor or questionable, get rid of it. It may be dangerous!

Refreeze Food Quickly

When you refreeze thawed food, freeze it quickly. If your freezer is full of warmed foods, to get a quick refreeze it is best to take the food to a commercial locker plant. Chill to 0° F. or below before taking the food back to your home freezer. Wrap the food well with newspapers and blankets before moving it to or from the freezer plant.

To refreeze food in your own freezer, rearrange the food to get the warmer packages against the refrigerated surface, if possible. Pile the packages so that the air can circulate around them. This means quicker freezing. If the freezer cabinet is too full, move some of the colder packages to the refrigerator, and return them gradually to the freezer.

VEGETABLES AND SHELLFISH



Be Prepared

1. Find out about your nearest locker plant. Arrange to take your food there in an emergency.

2. Try to locate a source of dry ice in your community.

3. Keep canning supplies on hand, and keep canning equipment in good working order. At times, the only practical solution is to can thawed food to save it.

4. During the seasons when power failure is frequent in your community, it's good insurance to run the freezer between 10° and 20° below zero.

5. Clean and cool the freezer before refilling it if you have found it necessary to remove stored food.

6. In choosing a freezer, select one with good insulation. A well-insulated freezer keeps food cold hours longer than a poorly insulated one, when the power goes off.

7. Use care in preparing, packaging, and freezing food. The more sanitary you are in preparing food for the freezer, the better it will be able to withstand a stoppage of the freezer. Sanitary preparation means fewer bacteria to cause spoilage. Frozen bacteria are not dead bacteria; when they warm up they become active.

Prepared by Evelyn L. Blanchard, extension nutritionist, Extension Service, in consultation with the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, primarily for use by State extension services in the Home Garden and Food Preservation Program.

