



**simcoe
muskoka**
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

15 Spring Drive
Barrie, ON L4M 6K3
Your Health Connection

Public Service Announcement

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Media Consultant

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Food and water safety during a power failure

SIMCOE MUSKOKA - The power failures resulting from the tornado that blew through the Midland/Penetanguishene area Wednesday night have left many people with possible food safety and drinking water safety issues in their homes. The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit offers the following safety tips for those whose power has been off for an extended period.

Refrigerator

If the food in your refrigerator has been above 4°C (39°F) for more than two hours as a result of a power failure, you should dispose of any items that are a high risk for contamination. These include:

- fish, poultry and meats, including cold cuts
- eggs, milk and cheese and other dairy products
- soups, stews, casseroles
- any food that may have come in contact with meat juices.

Keeping the door closed will keep the fridge cold longer.

Chest freezer

If your freezer is full, foods inside should remain safely frozen for up to 48 hours after a power failure.

If your freezer is half full, foods inside should remain safely frozen for 24 hours after a power failure.

Any foods that are thawed should be thrown out.

Any foods that have been left out at room temperature should be thrown out. Follow the guideline: If in doubt, throw it out!

Drinking water

Use bottled water for drinking or boil your water rapidly for at least one minute before use or making infant formula, juices, cooking, making ice, washing fruits and vegetables or brushing teeth.

Any residents who rely on private wells and who experienced power failure will have lost access to their drinking supply. The health unit cautions that untreated surface water is not a safe alternative. People without water supplies should use only bottled water or draw from a safe municipal supply.

Once the power is restored, residents who have private treatment systems for their drinking water should ensure their system is running properly before drinking the water by flushing all lines and letting the water run for two minutes. If there are concerns that the treatment system is not functioning properly, water should be boiled before drinking. Be sure to bring the water to a rolling boil for a minimum of one minute.

More information is also available by calling Your Health Connection at 721-7520 (1-877-721-7520), Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. More details are also available on the health unit website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

For easy access to community, social, health and related government services, see www.211ontario.ca or call 211.