



MEDIA ALERT

The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System - Serving New Jersey Since 1983

Media Contacts:

Nancy Sergeant, SGW, 973-263-5471, nsergeant@sgw.com

Mary Appelmann, SGW, 973-263-5182, mappelmann@sgw.com

Alicia Gambino, MA, CHES, NJPIES Director of Public Education, 973-972-9280,
agambino@njpies.org

Food/Refrigeration Safety Tips for Residents with Power Outages

Dr. Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director
New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)
Available for Interviews

NEWARK, N.J. — February 6, 2010 With large numbers of homes suffering from power outages, it is important to be careful about food stored in refrigerators and freezers which have lost power.

During a power outage, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed and open them only when necessary. If power is restored within four hours, items in the refrigerator should be safe to eat, according to the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System. A full freezer will stay at freezing temperatures for up to two days if the door remains closed. A half-full freezer will stay at freezing temperatures for up to one day if the door remains closed.

When power is restored, allow time for the refrigerator to reach below 40 degrees Fahrenheit before restocking. Make sure that the refrigerator is set below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Place a refrigerator thermometer in the center of the middle shelf and check the temperature. After a blackout, check the refrigerator temperature, if it has risen to 45 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, discard any potentially spoiled foods. Such foods include meat, poultry, fish, dairy and egg products, soft cheese, cooked beans, cooked rice, cooked potatoes, cooked pasta, potato salad, custard and pudding. And of course, the staff at NJPIES suggests, "When in doubt, throw it out!"

About NJPIES

As New Jersey's only poison control center, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System provides information on poison prevention and treatments. Chartered in 1983, NJPIES provides free consultation through telephone hot line services and the Web. Medical professionals such as physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer confidential advice regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention, drugs, food poisoning, animal bites and more. These specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NJPIES coordinates state poison education and research, and is designated as the regional poison center by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It tracks incidences of adverse reactions to food, drugs and vaccines in order to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A division of the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health of the New Jersey Medical School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, its state-of-the-art center is located on the school's Newark campus.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies, and those with any drug information questions, should call the toll-free hot line, **1-800-222-1222**, any time. The hearing impaired may call **973-926-8008**. For more information, visit www.njpies.org or call **(973) 972-9280**.

About UMDNJ

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey is the nation's largest freestanding public health sciences university, with more than 5,500 students attending. The state's three medical schools, a dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health-related professions, a school of nursing and a school of public health are housed on five campuses — Newark, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Scotch Plains, Camden and Stratford. Annually, there are more than two million patient visits at UMDNJ facilities and faculty practices at the campuses. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a level I trauma center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, a mental health and addiction services network.

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