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**Arkansas Department of Health**  
*Keeping Your Hometown Healthy*

## **With Recent Power Outages, Holiday Goodies May Not Be Worth the Risk**

Little Rock—The worst ice storm in the recent past is taking its toll in central Arkansas. In total, over 200,000 Arkansans have been impacted by power outages and the icy roads are making travel precarious. A less obvious outcome of the power outages is the increased risk of food-borne illness as a result of improper food storage.

People whose power was out for more than 2 hours should consider refrigerator contents suspect, and if power was out for more than 4 hours, the contents should be considered unsafe. Freezers are more likely to maintain appropriate temperatures than refrigerators, but are still at risk if power was out more than 24 hours.

According to Dr. Dirk Haselow, Arkansas State Epidemiologist, “Foods most likely to no longer be safe after the outage include chicken or turkey, seafood, any ground meat, any dishes with raw eggs or mayonnaise, any foods with cream, and all milk products. These foods should definitely be discarded. However, all food items are at risk.”

Haselow also says “Do not trust your sense of smell or taste to determine if the food is safe. Germs can grow on food at levels high enough to cause illness without changing the food’s taste.”

If Grandma’s pie is so delicious that you can’t go without, perhaps you can convince her to make another one when power is restored.

The Arkansas Department of Health accepts reports of food-borne illness via the internet:

[http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/epidemiology/Environmental/Documents/ADHEntericCaseReportForm\(web\)forthePublic.pdf](http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/epidemiology/Environmental/Documents/ADHEntericCaseReportForm(web)forthePublic.pdf)

or by email at [adh.foodsafe@arkansas.gov](mailto:adh.foodsafe@arkansas.gov), and by phone at 501-280-4364.

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