



An Extended Guide · No. 1790

Keeping Refrigerated Medicine Cold

A careful plan for insulin
and other cold medicines

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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! Read this first — when in doubt, throw it out

Here is the one rule that keeps your family safe when the power goes out: when in doubt, throw it out. Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors shut, and know the clock — a closed refrigerator keeps food safe for about 4 hours, and a full freezer holds its cold for about 48 hours (about 24 hours if it is only half full). Any perishable food — meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, soft cheese, cut fruit, and leftovers — that has been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 2 hours or more should be thrown out. Never taste food to decide whether it is safe; many of the germs that cause food poisoning leave no smell, taste, or change you can see. For anything about a specific medicine, your pharmacist or doctor is the real authority here, not a general guide like this one.

Let's make a gentle plan for your refrigerated medicine

Some medicines — insulin is the one I hear about most — need to stay refrigerated, and a power outage can turn that into a worry all its own. A little planning turns it into something calm and manageable.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I want to be upfront about something important right away: I'm not a medical professional. I can help with coolers, thermometers, and backup power, but your pharmacist or doctor is the real authority on your specific medicine.

That's really the heart of this whole guide. A cooler ready to go, a written list of your medicines, and your pharmacist's number close at hand turn a scary moment into a manageable one.

★ Worried right now, mid-outage?

If the power is out and you're not sure what to do about a refrigerated medicine, call your pharmacist first — they know your medicine and your situation. If you'd like a hand with a cooler or a thermometer, that part I can help with. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you already know most of what matters.

- ❑ Keep a cooler ready for your refrigerated medicine.
- ❑ Keep medicine cool, but do not let insulin freeze.
- ❑ Ask your pharmacist about your specific medicine — they're the real authority, not a general guide.
- ❑ Keep a written list of your medicines and how each should be stored.
- ❑ Note the time the power went out.
- ❑ When in doubt, ask a professional. Never guess.

✓ Get this ready before you need it

Ask your pharmacist today how each of your refrigerated medicines should be stored, and jot the answer down. A few minutes now saves real worry later.

The golden rule for medicine: ask your pharmacist

Everything else in this guide supports one idea: for your specific medicine, your pharmacist or doctor is the one to ask.

Food safety follows general rules that apply to nearly every kitchen. Medicine is different. Every medicine is made a little differently, and your pharmacist knows the exact one you take and what a warm spell or a cold snap might mean for it.

So think of this guide as the practical side of things — the cooler, the thermometer, the written list — and think of your pharmacist as the one who answers the medical question: is this particular medicine still good.

! Your pharmacist knows your medicine best

I can help with a cooler, a thermometer, or backup power, but I'm not a medical professional. For anything about whether your specific medicine is still good, please call your pharmacist or doctor.

Which medicines this guide is about

Insulin is the most common one I hear about, but it isn't the only medicine that needs to stay cool.

Insulin comes up more than anything else during outages, but a number of other medicines — and some liquid medications — also need refrigeration. If you're not sure which of yours do, there's a simple way to find out.

Check the label on the prescription bottle or box, or call your pharmacy. They'll tell you plainly whether a medicine needs to stay cold, and what they'd like you to do if it warms up.

✓ Not sure what needs refrigeration?

Check the label, or give your pharmacy a quick call. It takes a minute and clears up any guesswork ahead of time.

Give your medicine its own cooler

A cooler set aside just for medicine keeps things simple and keeps it out of a food cooler that gets opened and closed all day.

Keep it separate from your food, and label it clearly so anyone in the house knows what's inside. That way nobody digs through it looking for a sandwich.

- Use a separate, labeled cooler just for medicine.
- Keep it in a cool spot, out of direct sun.
- Add a thermometer so you can see it's staying cool, not guess.
- Keep it closed as much as you can, just like a fridge.
- If you're not sure how a specific medicine should be kept, ask your pharmacist.

✓ Label it clearly

A strip of tape and a marker is all it takes. A label like 'Medicine — do not open for food' keeps things simple for everyone in the house.

Please, do not let insulin freeze

Freezing can ruin insulin and some other medicines, so the goal is to keep things cool, not cold enough to freeze.

Ice is wonderful for keeping food cold, but medicine needs a gentler touch. Once insulin freezes, it's often ruined, even if it looks completely normal afterward.

A thermometer in the medicine cooler helps you see the difference between nicely cool and too cold, instead of guessing by feel.

! Cool, not frozen

Insulin and some other medicines can be ruined by freezing. Keep the cooler cool, keep the medicine away from direct contact with ice, and ask your pharmacist if you're ever unsure.

Keep a barrier between medicine and ice

If freezing is a risk in your cooler, a simple barrier solves it.

A cloth, a towel, or a small shelf inside the cooler keeps the medicine from touching the ice directly. That little bit of distance is often all it takes to stay cool without risking a freeze.

- Wrap the medicine in a cloth or towel before it goes near ice.
- Or use a small container or shelf to keep space between them.
- Check on it now and then rather than opening the cooler over and over.
- When in doubt, ask your pharmacist how best to keep your specific medicine cool.

✓ A simple trick

Think of it as a buffer zone — a folded towel between the ice and the medicine bag does the job nicely.

Make a written list of your medicines

A short list, made now, saves you from trying to remember everything during a stressful moment.

Sit down with your pharmacist and make a simple list: each medicine you take, and how it should be stored. It doesn't need to be fancy — a note card or a page in a notebook works just fine.

- Name of each medicine.
- How it should be stored (ask your pharmacist).
- Your pharmacy's phone number.
- Your pharmacist or doctor's name.

★ Keep it with your outage papers

Tuck this list into the same drawer or folder where you keep your food-safety notes and other outage papers, so it's easy to find when you need it.

Write down when the power went out

Just as you would for the food in the fridge, jot down the time the power quit.

It feels like a small thing, but it matters. If you ever need to call your pharmacist about a medicine, the first thing they're likely to ask is how long it went without power — and a sticky note answers that instantly.

If you were away or asleep when it happened, a blinking clock, a neighbor, or an outage alert from your utility can help you piece together a rough time.

✓ One sticky note, right on the cooler

A note with the time the power went out, stuck right on the medicine cooler, means you'll have the facts ready the moment you call your pharmacist.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

How you plan for your medicine looks a little different depending on where you live.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, outages tend to be shorter, and a pharmacy is usually close by if you need to ask a question or find somewhere to keep a medicine cold for a while.

- A short outage is often bridged easily by a cooler kept cool.
- A nearby pharmacy is a good backup if you have questions.
- One labeled medicine cooler with a thermometer is usually enough.
- If outages are common where you live, ask your pharmacist about a simple backup plan.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, outages often run longer, and the nearest pharmacy may be a real drive away. If you're on a private well, remember the well pump shares the backup power plan too.

- Plan for more cooler capacity, since outages may run longer.
- Think through a trip to town in advance in case you need the pharmacy.
- A well pump needs power too, so the medicine fridge shares backup power with the water.
- Ask your pharmacist ahead of time what a longer outage might mean for your specific medicine.

★ I can help with the cooler and thermometer

I'm glad to help you set up a cooler and a thermometer for your medicine — that's the practical side I know well. Just remember, that's not medical advice; for the medicine itself, your pharmacist is the one to ask. Call (330) 200-8042.

Sometimes the plan is to go where the power is

In a longer outage, traveling to keep medicine cold can be part of a smart plan.

A pharmacy, a hospital, or a relative with power may be able to help store a refrigerated medicine for a while during a longer outage. It's worth knowing your options before you need them.

Call your pharmacist first. They can tell you whether this makes sense for your specific medicine, and they may have suggestions you haven't thought of.

★ Know your options ahead of time

Ask your pharmacist now which nearby places might help in a long outage. Having a plan ready beats figuring it out in the moment.

A battery power station can help too

If you'd like extra peace of mind, backup power is worth considering for a small medicine fridge.

A battery or solar power station makes no exhaust, so it's safe to use indoors — a real advantage over a gas generator, which must always stay outdoors.

✓ A battery power station is safe to use indoors

Unlike a gas generator, a battery or solar power station makes no exhaust and no carbon monoxide, so it is safe to run inside the house right next to the refrigerator. A gas generator is the opposite — it must always run outdoors, well away from doors, windows, and vents.

Even with backup power in place, keep asking your pharmacist about how your specific medicine should be stored. Backup power keeps things running; your pharmacist is the one who knows the medicine.

If a medicine got warm, please don't guess

This is one of those moments where guessing isn't worth the risk.

If you think a refrigerated medicine got warmer than it should have, set it aside and don't use it yet. Call your pharmacist and describe what happened.

They can tell you, for your specific medicine, whether it's still good or whether you need a replacement. That's not a guess I'm equipped to make, and it's not one you should make either.

! Set it aside and call

Don't use a medicine you think got warm until you've talked with your pharmacist or doctor. Set it aside, keep it cool in the meantime, and make the call.

If a medicine froze, please don't guess either

Freezing is often harder on medicine than warmth is, especially for insulin.

If a refrigerated medicine froze, even briefly, set it aside rather than using it. Frozen insulin is often ruined, and it's not something you can tell just by looking at it.

Call your pharmacist and let them know what happened. Ask them directly whether it's still usable or whether it needs to be replaced.

! Frozen insulin is often ruined

Do not use insulin, or any medicine, that you know has frozen. Set it aside, and ask your pharmacist whether it's still usable.

A little prep before a storm pays off

When there's warning a storm is coming, a few minutes of prep make everything calmer later.

- Call your pharmacist now and ask what to do for your specific medicine.
- Ready your medicine cooler and thermometer.
- Know which medicines are the most critical to protect.
- If you're low on any medicine, refill it before the storm arrives.

★ I can help with the practical side

Before a storm, I'm glad to help you get a cooler and a thermometer set up and ready to go. Call (330) 200-8042.

When the power comes back on

Once the lights are back, there are just a couple of gentle steps left.

Return your medicine to the refrigerator once it's back to its normal temperature. If anything got warm or froze while the power was out, don't guess about whether it's still good.

Call your pharmacist and tell them what happened — how long the power was out, and whether the medicine got warm or froze. They'll help you decide what comes next.

★ Still not sure? Call them

Your pharmacist would always rather get a quick call than have you guess. It's exactly what they're there for.

Common mistakes people make

A few avoidable slip-ups come up again and again with refrigerated medicine.

- **Freezing insulin by accident**, often by packing it too close to the ice.
- **Guessing whether it's still good** instead of calling the pharmacist.
- **Not having a cooler ready** before the power goes out.
- **Skipping the written list**, which makes an outage more stressful than it needs to be.
- **Waiting to call the pharmacist**, when a quick call early on is easier for everyone.

! The costliest mistake is guessing

When it comes to medicine, a confident guess is the one thing I'd ask you to avoid. A quick call to your pharmacist is always the safer step.

For family helping from a distance

If you're an adult child looking out for a parent, there's a lot you can do without being in the same house.

You can help build the written medicine list together over the phone, and make sure a cooler and thermometer are ready before an outage happens.

You can also call the pharmacy together, on speakerphone, so everyone hears the same plan straight from the source. It's a small thing that brings real peace of mind.

★ Helping from afar

I work with plenty of families where the adult kids live a while away. I'm glad to help a parent get set up here in Portage County while you're kept in the loop. Call (330) 200-8042.

A calm, prepared approach beats a scramble

None of this has to feel overwhelming.

A cooler, a written list, and your pharmacist's number turn a scary situation into a manageable one. You don't need to memorize anything — just have the pieces ready and know who to call.

That's really the whole guide in one sentence: be ready, and let your pharmacist be the authority on the medicine itself.

! The plan in one sentence

Keep it cool, keep a list, and when it comes to your specific medicine, ask your pharmacist or doctor.

Print this page and stick it on the fridge

Keep this where you'll see it fast during an outage.

- ☐ Cooler ready? Get your medicine into it.
- ☐ Keep it cool — do not freeze insulin.
- ☐ Ask your pharmacist about your specific medicine.
- ☐ Keep a written list of your medicines and their storage.
- ☐ Note the time the power went out.

★ Keep my number nearby too

Tape my number next to this checklist for the cooler-and-thermometer side of things: (330) 200-8042. Keep your pharmacist's number right there too.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most often about keeping refrigerated medicine cold.

Q: Is my insulin still good after a power outage?

That's a question for your pharmacist. They know your specific medicine and situation and can tell you for sure.

Q: Can I freeze it to help keep it cold?

No — please do not freeze insulin or other refrigerated medicine. Keep it cool instead, with a barrier between it and any ice.

Q: How long does refrigerated medicine last without power?

It varies by medicine, so there's no general number to give here. Ask your pharmacist about your specific medicine.

Q: What do I keep it in?

A cooler set aside just for medicine, kept cool but not frozen, with a thermometer to check it.

Q: Who do I call if I'm not sure?

Your pharmacist or doctor. They're the real authority on your specific medicine — I'm glad to help with the cooler and thermometer side of things.

★ Still have a question?

I'm always glad to help with the practical side — coolers, thermometers, backup power. For anything about the medicine itself, your pharmacist or doctor is the one to call. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made keeping your refrigerated medicine cold in an outage feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't do the licensed electrical or gas work myself — for that I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

Medicine in an Outage

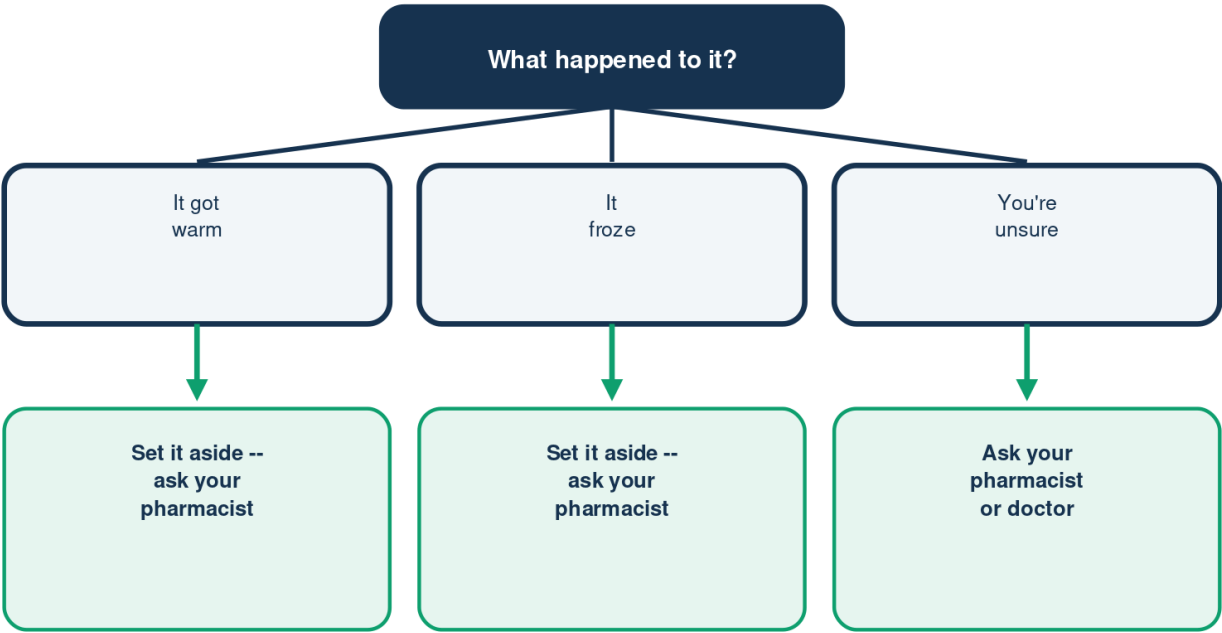
Careful and prepared



For your specific medicine, always ask your pharmacist or doctor.

Is My Medicine Still Good?

Do not guess -- ask a professional



This is general information -- your pharmacist knows your medicine.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

Cold-Medicine Do's

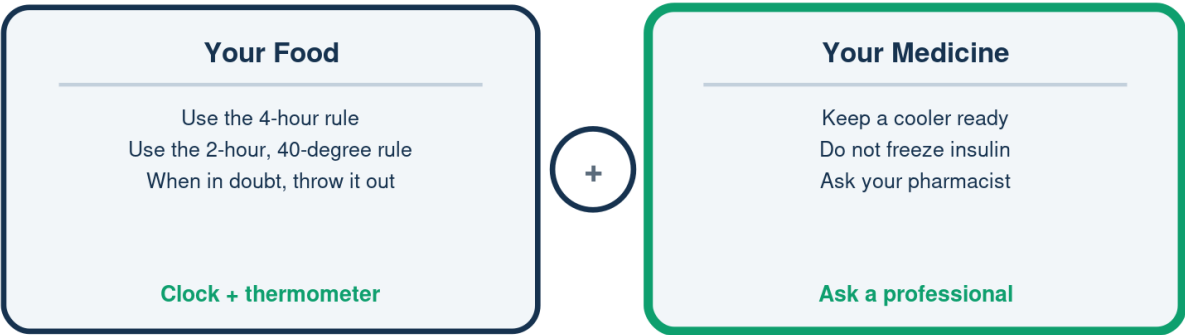
A careful plan

	Do	Note
Ready a cooler	Yes	Keep it cool
Freeze insulin	No	Freezing can ruin it
Ask your pharmacist	Always	Your authority
Keep a written list	Yes	With your papers

When unsure about medicine, call a professional.

Food vs Medicine

Different rules, different experts



Food follows the clock and the thermometer; medicine follows your pharmacist's advice.

For medicine, a professional's guidance comes first.



Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.
You just have to remember you can call.
Friendly, in-home tech help -- I come to you.

BILL'S PROMISE

If you are not 100% happy with a visit, I will make it right -- or refund it. No awkwardness, no fine print. That is how I would want to be treated.

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— Bill

Prefer help without a visit?

Bill can screen-share and fix many things remotely — a flat \$49, free for Support Plan members.



A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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