



## Monitoring Your Home Freezer

By Diane Whitten, CCE Nutrition & Food Educator

### Should You Invest in a Wireless Temperature Sensor?

Separate large freezer units are a great asset to a homestead or for someone preparing for lean times. Since they're usually not stored in your main living area, you're not monitoring them daily, as you do your kitchen refrigerator and freezer. How will you know if the freezer breaks down, putting your food worth hundreds, if not thousands of dollars, at risk?

This is where a wireless temperature sensor can save the day and your wallet. These sensors monitor the temperature in your freezer, and can send you an alert if the temperature is too high. As with all technology the price and features vary widely, but for as little as \$14 you can get a basic monitor that will send you an alarm when your freezer temperature changes. More expensive models connect with your smart phone and can monitor humidity in addition to temperature. The humidity feature isn't necessary if you just want to know if your freezer has stopped working.

An internet search for wireless temperature sensors for freezers will lead you to information on many options to safeguard the food in your freezer. It's well worth the investment to save your food and prevent the heartache of throwing away hundreds of dollars' worth of food.

#### **When the Power Comes Back On – Check the Temperature**

Sometimes the power goes out for just a few hours, or maybe even up to a few days. While the food in your refrigerator will remain in a safe temperature zone for only 4 hours, a food in a full freezer can remain safe for up to two days. The key bit of information you need is the temperature of the freezer when the power comes back on. If the temperature is at or below 40°F, the food will be safe to eat. Freezing, thawing and refreezing will affect the quality of the food, but not its safety. Therefore, at least keep a simple thermometer in your freezer so you can determine whether or not your food can be refrozen, or taken out to consume in the next few days, if you don't want to refreeze it.

For more tips check out this USDA fact sheet: [Keep Your Food Safe During Emergencies](#)

Contact Diane Whitten at Cornell Cooperative Extension with your questions about food and nutrition: 518-885-8995, [dwhitten@cornell.edu](mailto:dwhitten@cornell.edu).