

Tailgating Food Safety

The football tailgating season is here. "Tailgating," literally means serving food and drink from the tailgate of a car or truck. Tailgating has evolved over the years and become more elaborate. With an outdoor kitchen comes food safety concerns that could put tailgaters at risk for foodborne illness.



WHAT ARE THE RULES OF THE TAILGATING FOOD SAFETY GAME?

Keep It Clean

- Over 50% of all foodborne illness is caused by unclean hands. The best option is washing hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Bring water for handwashing, if none will be available at the site. Include liquid hand soap and paper towels with handwashing supplies.
- Pack disposable hand and kitchen wipes, as a cleaning alternative.

Keep Cold Foods Cold

- Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40°F or colder.
- Pack the cooler last, taking foods directly from the freezer and refrigerator.
- Securely contain raw meat and poultry to prevent the raw juices from contaminating ready-to-eat foods such as sandwiches and salads.
- A cooler becomes a portable refrigerator; the temperature of 40°F or colder should be maintained. This can be determined by placing a refrigerator freezer thermometer in the cooler.
- Bring a separate cooler for beverages. Frequent opening lowers the internal temperature of the cooler and can put food at risk of being in the temperature danger zone.

IN THE TEMPERATURE DANGER ZONE, 40 - 140°F, BACTERIA MULTIPLIES QUICKLY ON PERISHABLE FOODS. FOODS IN THE TEMPERATURE DANGER ZONE FOR TWO OR MORE HOURS, ARE UNSAFE TO EAT AND SHOULD BE THROWN OUT. IF IT IS 90°F OR HIGHER OUTSIDE, FOOD SHOULD BE THROWN OUT AFTER ONE HOUR.

Keep Hot Foods Hot

- To keep home prepared foods like sloppy joes or chili hot, insulated thermos containers work well. Fill the container with boiling water, let it stand for a few minutes, empty, fill with hot food.
- If electricity is available on site or you have an auto converter, slow cookers are an option for keeping hot foods hot. To retain heat, keep the cover on the slow cooker until serving.
- Hot foods should be held at 140°F or above. This can be determined by using a food thermometer.

Grill It Right

- When grilling, the only safe way to determine doneness is to use a calibrated food thermometer. Reaching a safe minimum internal temperature ensures that harmful bacteria will be destroyed.

SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

All poultry (whole, parts, ground)	165 °F
Ground meats (beef, pork, lamb)	160 °F
Beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, roasts, and chops	145 °F**
Hot dogs and bratwursts	165 °F

****as measured with a food thermometer before removing meat from the heat source. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook meats and poultry to higher temperatures.**

- Clean the food thermometer after each use to avoid cross contamination.

Serve It Safe

- When taking foods off the grill, put them on a clean plate. Don't put cooked food on a platter that held raw meat. Raw meat and poultry juices are full of bacteria that could contaminate the cooked product.
- Bring ample long handle serving spoons and tongs to minimize possible contamination by bare hand contact with foods.
- Disposable plates, cups, and silverware minimize clean-up and the risk of cross contamination.

Clean Up

- Try to plan the right amount of perishable foods to take. That way, you won't have to worry about the storage or safety of leftovers.
- If you do have leftovers, place leftover perishable food promptly in the cooler. Remember the two hour rule! It's one hour, if it is over 90°F outside.
- Remember garbage bags, twist ties, and other clean-up supplies. The final tailgating clean-up, is an important step before you leave for the game.

Glenyce Peterson-Vangsness
Extension Educator, Food Science
University of Minnesota Extension
1-888-241-3214

peter178@umn.edu

www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety

