









From the End Zone: Touchdown Tips for Food Safety



Sports fans are gearing up across the country to tackle tailgating. This season, the American Dietetic Association offers tips to defend your pre- and post-game gatherings from the most challenging opponent – food poisoning.

-  1. Wash hands before, during and after preparing food for a tailgate. Sing your favorite team's fight song – while lathering with soap and water for 20 seconds.
2. Be sure to pack moist towelettes for guests to clean up before digging in.
3. Always defrost meats in the refrigerator or in the microwave – never at the tailgate. Marinate meat in the refrigerator and don't reuse the marinade unless boiled.
4. For the trip to the tailgate, tightly seal raw or thawed meat in plastic wrap to prevent juices from contaminating other food items. Consider packing meat products in one cooler and additional foods in another.
5.  Keep raw meats and ready-to-eat foods separate. Pack extra or color-coded plates or utensils to help prevent cross-contamination. Use one set for raw foods and another for cooked foods.
6.  Cook to proper temperatures. A meat thermometer is the only reliable way to ensure foods are safe to eat.
7. Tailgating favorites like hamburgers and bratwurst should be cooked to 160°F and chicken breasts to 170° F.
8.  Pack food in a well-insulated cooler with plenty of ice or icepacks to keep temperatures below 40° F. Keep a refrigerator thermometer inside the cooler at all times to monitor the temperature.
9. In cool-weather climates, transport coolers in your trunk rather than in a heated car – the cold temperatures outside will help keep food chilled. For warmer climates, do the opposite. Transport coolers in the backseat of your air-conditioned car instead of the hot trunk, especially for long road trips.
10.  Don't forget that carry-out and/or pre-prepared foods are also susceptible to food poisoning.
11. Throw away perishable tailgate items before entering the game. Foods should not be left unrefrigerated for more than two hours. In hot weather (90° F or above) this time is reduced to one hour.
12.  After the game, serve and eat only non-perishable foods unless foods packed in the cooler remain stored at 40° F or below.



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