



NEWS RELEASE

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During Food Safety Education Month, IDPH Offers Tips on Keeping Game Day Fun and Healthy

Whether tailgating or gathering around the TV, these tips will ensure safety is part of your game plan

SPRINGFIELD – September is Food Safety Education Month, and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is offering tips on ensuring that your Game Day plans are not marred by improperly cooked or handled food. Safe preparation and service of food items is key to preventing the spread of foodborne illness.

“Football season has started, and I, like many Illinoisians, am very excited to root for my favorite teams with family and friends this season,” said IDPH Director, Dr. Sameer Vohra. “September marks Food Safety Education Month, and as we get together to tailgate before games or gather around the TV with plenty of snacks, we encourage everyone to enjoy this truly American experience by practicing important food safety practices. Failure to following food safety guidelines increases the risk of food poisoning, which can result in nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, and can ruin even the most thrilling victory.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has compiled [a list of Game Day food safety tips](#). They include:

- Wash your hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds before, during, and after food preparation, and before eating
- Keep raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods like vegetables
- When grilling, make sure food reaches a safe internal temperature (at least 165°F for chicken and other poultry, and 160°F for ground beef)
- Make sure hot foods are maintained at 140°F or warmer, while cold foods are kept at 40°F or cooler)
- Perishable food should be thrown out if it’s been sitting at room temperature for more than two hours (one hour if it’s in temperatures above 90°F)

Failure to follow food safety guidelines increases the risk of food poisoning, which can result in nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Anyone can be susceptible to food poisoning, but certain groups are more likely to get sick or suffer more intense symptoms, including those over age 65 or under the age of 5, people with compromised immune systems, or people who are pregnant.

You can learn more about food safety at the IDPH website: [Food Safety \(illinois.gov\)](#).

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