



Super Bowl Party Safety

If you are hosting a Super Bowl party this year, take the offensive and follow these tips to keep your guests safe from foodborne illness.

Proper Food Handling

One of the biggest food safety mistakes people make at parties is letting perishable food items sit out for too long.

- Any foods – hot or cold – that have been sitting out at room temperature for more than two hours can easily allow bacteria to multiply and cause illness.
- Once served, hot foods need to be held at 140°F or warmer. Use chafing dishes, slow cookers or warming trays to keep foods warm.
- Cold foods need to be held at 40°F or colder. Keep cold dishes in the refrigerator until just before serving and nest dishes in bowls of ice to help keep the food cold.
- Arrange and serve food on several small platters rather than on one large platter, and replace empty platters rather than adding fresh food to a dirty platter.
- Keep track of how long foods have been sitting out – if it's perishable and has been sitting out for more than two hours, play it safe and throw it out.

Use a Thermometer

Because internal temperature, not meat color, indicates doneness, it's important to use a food thermometer to verify foods are cooked thoroughly.

- Steaks should be cooked to at least 145°F with a 3-minute rest time.
- Hamburgers need to be cooked to 160°F.
- Whole or ground poultry should be cooked to a minimum of 165°F.
- Fully cooked foods or hot dishes that are prepared in advance should be reheated until the food reaches an internal temperature of 165°F.

Keep the Kitchen Clean

A recent [NSF germ study](#) revealed that many kitchens harbor more bacteria than the bathroom. In fact, the item most frequently used to clean dishes and countertops – a sponge or dish rag – was actually the germiest place found in most homes. To avoid cross contamination:

- Sanitize wet sponges in the microwave daily (1-2 minutes on high). Replace cloth rags daily.
- Clean and sanitize all food preparation surfaces before and after handling food.
- Kitchen sinks, which had the second highest concentration of germs in the NSF study, are often overlooked, but need to be cleaned with a disinfecting cleaner 1-2 times per week.
- Keep raw meat and poultry separate from cooked or ready-to-eat foods.
- Wash platters, cutting boards or utensils that have touched uncooked meat or poultry with hot soapy water and rinse thoroughly before using with any other foods.

Clean Hands

Dirty hands are one of the biggest culprits for spreading bacteria, and finger foods at parties are especially vulnerable.

- Don't prepare or handle food without first washing your own hands and encourage your party guests to do the same.
- If you have younger party guests, introduce them to the Scrub Club (www.scrubclub.org), where the Soaper Heroes can help them learn how to properly wash their hands.
- Proper handwashing involves scrubbing hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, then rinsing thoroughly and drying with a clean towel or air dryer.

Don't let unsafe food spoil your game day. Practice safe food handling and make food safety part of your Super Bowl fun.