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Food safety at Super Bowl parties

Follow these CDC tips and come out a winner on the big day

Tackling a buffet at your Super Bowl gathering? Practice these game rules from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and keep the runs on the field.

- Cook it well. Measure minimum internal temperatures with a food thermometer. For party faves, like chicken wings and ground beef sliders, make sure that they reach 165 degrees F and 160 degrees F, respectively. Be a winner. Invest in a good food thermometer for you or someone you love.
- Keep it clean. Before you eat or handle food, thoroughly wash your hands, food prep tools and surfaces, and all fruits and veggies.
- Watch the time. Follow recommended microwave cooking and standing times (the extra minutes needed for food to cook completely). Track how long foods have been on the buffet. Discard after two hours.
- Keep it safe. Use chafing dishes and slow cookers, and warming trays to keep hot food at 140 ° F or more. Keep cold foods, like salsa and dips, at 40 °F or colder. Nest serving dishes in bowls of ice or use small trays. Replace ice often.
- Be aware of the "danger zone" between 40 °F and 140 °F where harmful bacteria grows. Play it safe and refrigerate food within 2 hours.
- Protect all "TO-GOs." Discard foods that have been on the buffet over two hours. Divide leftovers into smaller portions, place in shallow containers, and refrigerate.
- Avoid mix-ups. Separate raw meats from ready-to-eat foods, like veggies. Provide serving utensils and small plates to discourage eating directly from bowls with dips and salsa. If you see "double-dippers" (folks who repeatedly eat or dip from a shared food dish), throw the penalty flag before someone is down on the field!

For more information see www.kanehealth.com/food_safety.htm , www.cdc.gov, and www.foodsafety.gov.

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