

# Ways to reduce food-related illness at Super Bowl parties

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*Photo by David McNew/Getty Images*

Pizza, wings, burgers, chips, cookies, and even veggie trays will be served across America in celebration of the [Super Bowl](#), making Super Bowl Sunday the second biggest eating day of the year next to Thanksgiving. Celebrating the big game with [food](#) and drink can be big fun, but ignoring important consumption guidelines may put a damper on life after the party.

## Defrost Properly

Frozen meat should be defrosted in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave only. Defrosting meat on the counter or in the sink may lead to rapid [bacteria](#) growth on meat which may lead to food poisoning.

## Cook Food to Proper Temperature

Eating undercooked or raw meat may expose the consumer to salmonella, E.coli, and/or campylobacter. The best way to insure that meat is cooked to the proper temperature is to use a meat thermometer to check the internal temperature. The probe of the meat thermometer should be inserted into the thickest part of the meat. Color is never an accurate indicator of safe food temperature.

Beef, pork, and lamb should be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 160°F, and poultry should be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 165°F.

## Clean Fruits and Vegetables

Fresh fruits and vegetables can be contaminated with bacteria such as listeria and salmonella. To help prevent ingestion of bad bacteria, scrub or rinse raw fruits and vegetables under running tap water then dry before slicing. Slice with a clean knife. Never use a knife that has been used on meat or cheese without properly washing in hot, soapy water, and always cut on a clean cutting board. Remove the outer-most leaves of lettuce and cabbage.

## Check Dairy and Juices

Dairy products and juices should be pasteurized. Though pasteurization does not eliminate all pathogens, it does help eliminate bacteria like E.coli.

## Do Not Cross-Contaminate

Keep meat wrapped in plastic bags in the refrigerator and make sure that juices do not drip onto other foods.

Never mix raw and cooked foods. Use only clean cutting boards, knives, utensils and dishes. Never put cooked food on a plate that has held raw meat without the plate being washed. Keep counters clean using an antibacterial cleaner or hot, soapy water.

**Do Not Reuse Marinade**

Marinade for meat should not be re-used for more meat, nor should it be used as a sauce or dressing. Marinade will contain bacteria from exposure to the initial batch of meat and that bacteria will contaminate any other food it touches.

**Refrigerate Leftovers**

Food should not be left at room temperature for more than two hours. At the two hour mark, bacteria grow at a dangerous rate. Leftovers should be wrapped and refrigerated promptly.

**Wash Hands**

Unwashed hands can spread noroviruses. Wash hands before preparing food and before and after eating. Do not rely on hand sanitizers to keep hands clean, the best way to keep hands clean is to wash them with hot, soapy water.

**Do Not Share Food or Drink**

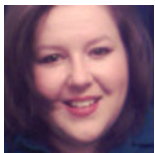
Sharing food or drink with others may expose consumers to many potentially deadly illnesses such as mononucleosis, hepatitis A, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), meningitis, scarlet fever, influenza and the common cold. Do not share cups, cans or bottles, do not bite food that someone else has eaten off of, and do not double dip in dips, salsa, and sauces.

Super Bowl parties should be fun, but keeping food preparation and consumption safe can help to make sure that everyone has a healthy eating experience.

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