

The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System — Serving New Jersey Since 1983

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:
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Super Bowl Food Safety: Don't Sweat It

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Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – February 2, 2017 — What do food, football, family time, and food safety have in common (besides the letter F)? They're all part of what makes this a great day! People sometimes overlook food safety, but it's not something to be taken lightly. With Super Bowl Sunday right around the corner, making plans may be stressful. Like any large task, preparing food for football night is not something you should put off. Food safety is a serious matter, because food poisoning can quickly turn a Super Bowl feast into a Super Bowl fiasco!

What exactly is food poisoning, and why is it that big of a deal? Here are some striking facts:

- Food poisoning affects 1 out of every 6 Americans each year. This adds up to around 48 million people nationwide.¹
- Food poisoning can happen just a few hours after consuming contaminated food.
- Some symptoms are nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and fever.
- The effects of food poisoning are not always immediate. Some long-term ones include kidney failure and brain damage.¹

While avoiding food poisoning may seem difficult, it is actually quite simple if you follow a few tips while preparing for a meal:

1. Food Shopping

Who doesn't love food shopping? While it can be a fun experience, there are some things you need to keep in mind:

- First, take care to keep poultry, meat, and seafood items separate from produce.
- Make sure everything is in its own bag. You can even double-bag items to be extra safe!
- Keep meat, fish, poultry, and eggs last on your list. If these stay out of the fridge and in your cart too long, they can spoil and become non-edible.
- Finally, you might be tired after a long shopping trip, but make sure to freeze or refrigerate all meat, poultry, seafood, and dairy products.

2. Food Preparation

Now that you've bought all you need for your party, there are several precautions you should take while getting the food ready:

¹ FoodSafety.gov. [Check Your Steps.](#)

- Don't defrost meat, poultry, or fish on the counter. Marinate and store these in the refrigerator.
- Wash fruits and vegetables well and ensure that they don't touch any surfaces exposed to raw meats.
- Similarly, use separate cutting boards, dishes, and utensils for cooked and uncooked foods, and make sure to wash them between uses.
- Don't forget one of the most important things – wash your hands with warm water and soap!

3. Food Cooking

Whether you experiment with new recipes or stick to some tried-and-true items, it's important that you cook food properly.

- Use a food thermometer to determine whether food has been cooked enough.
- Check out the website www.foodsafety.gov for proper temperatures.

4. Food Serving

Time to eat!

- It may seem like a good idea to make all the snacks and appetizers earlier on, but it is not safe to leave cooked foods sitting out on the counter for more than 2 hours.
- Use a warming tray or chafing dish to keep food warm (at 140 °F or above).²
- Similarly, don't leave foods that are meant to be cold out on the counter more than 2 hours.

5. Food Storage

Odds are you will probably end up with leftovers from your Super Bowl bash. It is important to store them properly. Even if foods are cooked, they are still at risk for contamination.

- Keep leftovers in the fridge for a maximum of three or four days, and make sure your refrigerator is set at or below 40°F.
- Food in the freezer can be kept longer, but again, set it to the right temperature (0°F).
- When you reheat foods, make sure they are hot enough.
- If you're using a microwave, check that the food's temperature has reached 165°F.²

If at any time during the food preparation process you are uncertain of something, don't hesitate to get help. The NJ Poison Center is here to answer any questions you may have along the way or if a food poisoning situation should occur. Don't rely on guessing or a web search. It's better to be safe than sorry! The Poison Help Line (1-800-222-1222) is available 24/7 to any resident who may need help. However, call **911** if someone becomes unconscious, stops breathing, is seizing, is bleeding a lot, or is difficult to wake up.

It's a good idea to save the Poison Help Line (1-800-222-1222) as a contact in your cell phone. Also, write it down and post it in your home, office, apartment, etc. Make sure it's in a visible and easily reachable place for all your guests to see during the holidays. This way, you can have peace of mind, and your only worry will be whether or not your favorite football team will win!

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

² FoodSafety.gov. [Cook to the Right Temperature.](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

We are social. Join us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter (@NJPoisonCenter) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc.

Real People. Real Answers.

About NJPIES

As New Jersey's only poison control center, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System provides information on poison prevention and treatments. Chartered in 1983, NJPIES provides free consultation through telephone hot line services and the Web. Medical professionals such as physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer confidential advice regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention, drugs, food poisoning, animal bites and more. These specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NJPIES coordinates state poison education and research and is designated as the regional poison center by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It tracks incidences of adverse reactions to food, drugs and vaccines in order to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A division of the Department of Emergency Medicine of the New Jersey Medical School of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus. NJPIES is funded, in part, by the NJ Department of Health and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies, and those with any drug information questions, should call the toll-free hot line, **800-222-1222**, any time. The hearing impaired may call **973-926-8008**. For more information, visit www.njpies.org or call **973-972-9280**.

About Rutgers

Established in 1766, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is America's eighth oldest institution of higher learning and one of the nation's premier public research universities. Serving more than 65,000 students on campuses, centers, institutes and other locations throughout the state, Rutgers is the only public university in New Jersey that is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities.

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) is the health care education, research, and clinical division of Rutgers University, comprising nine schools and their attendant faculty practices, centers, institutes and clinics; New Jersey's leading comprehensive cancer care center; and New Jersey's largest behavioral health care network.

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