

Fire Up The Dawgs and Keep Your Tailgate Safe
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It's that time of year, when folks all over Bulldog Nation are getting ready to Fire Up the Dawgs! A good game plan and a strong defense can prevent bacteria and micro-organisms from putting your tailgate team on the sidelines.

Which Foods are Safe to Serve?

- Single-serving, pre-packaged portions are the safest. Consider offering sandwiches, cookies, or other food items in individual, food-grade plastic bags or film wrap. This will minimize the number of people who come in contact with the food.
- Dry foods or those high in sugar are almost always safe. Breads, rolls, cakes (without cream filling), fresh fruits and vegetables, cookies and crackers are safe. Use caution when serving cooked or processed foods such as lunch meat, hot dogs, vegetables and salads.
- High-protein foods like meat, milk and dishes containing egg are potentially hazardous.
- Be cautious with marinades.
- Potatoes, rice, custards, puddings, pies, gravies and stuffing should be served with extreme caution.
- Time and temperature control of these foods is extremely important.
- The life of most deli meats and foods is short. Roast beef, chicken breast, and turkey have a shorter refrigerator life than processed meats or cold cuts.

Follow these simple steps to ensure safety:

- Plan for few or no leftovers. If you have leftovers, make sure they can be properly cooled in a cooler; if not, discard.
- Pack a separate beverage cooler so the main food cooler is opened less and stays cooler.
- Bring enough ice to keep coolers below 40°F until food is gone or returned to refrigerator.
- Use insulated carrying cases with heated inserts to transport hot foods or place hot foods in insulated "coolers" to maintain temperature.
- If possible, keep raw meat in a separate cooler, away from ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. If not, store raw meat in leak-proof containers and under ready-to-eat foods. This will help prevent cross-contamination.
- Pack liquid soap, plenty of warm water, and paper towels for handwashing. A beverage dispenser works for transporting warm water and can be placed on the edge of a tailgate for easy dispensing. In a pinch, disposable antiseptic wet wipes can be used. With either method, remember to wash or wipe hands thoroughly for 20 seconds. Time and the friction of rubbing are what kill the bacteria.

REMEMBER most food poisoning bacteria can NOT be seen, smelled, or tasted. Bacteria multiply fastest between temperatures of 40 and 140; it's what we call the Danger Zone

If in doubt, throw it out!

Keep hot foods HOT (above 140° F) and cold foods COLD (40° F or below).

For more information, contact the Oconee County Cooperative Extension Office at (706) 769-3946 or stop by our office located behind the Oconee County Courthouse.