

Don't Fall Sick with a Foodborne Illness this Autumn

Tips on how to avoid getting a foodborne illness this Fall.

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, October 25, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The temperatures are falling right along with the leaves, and all those autumnal traditions and festivities are just around the corner. Whether it's picking apples and drinking cider, having fun on a hayride, walking amongst the colorful trees, or even playing in the pumpkin patch, your fall fun will very likely involve food. This is the time of year when leaves are supposed to turn a different color and fall to the ground. But humans? Not so much.



Fall picnic scene. Photo credit: Storyblocks

[Stop Foodborne Illness](#), the national nonprofit representing individuals and families in the fight against foodborne pathogens, wants to make sure you can fully enjoy this beautiful time of the year. So, here are some ideas for keeping your loved ones and your food safe.

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Deirdre Schlunegger

Before you get into the frolic and fun of fall, knowing these tips for eating outside ensures the awesomeness of autumn:

- Wash your hands, before and after! Are you petting animals, riding rides at the fair, using “the facilities”, changing diapers, eating corndogs, or any one of a million other actions? Remember: Washing your hands is like a do-it-yourself vaccine to avoid getting sick.
- Store perishable foods in a cooler or insulated bag. When transporting food that needs to stay cold, place it in a cooler or insulated bag, with a cold source such as ice or

commercial freezing gels. Avoid putting ready-to-eat foods in direct contact with ice.

- Keep perishable ready-to-eat foods chilled right up until serving time. Cold foods need to be kept at a temperature of 40 °F or below. Organize your cooler contents (keeping beverages in one cooler and perishable foods in another) and reduce the number of times the cooler is opened. Remember: A full cooler maintains its cold temps longer than a partially-filled cooler.
- Keep foods to be cooked, separated and chilled until it time to cook them. If the day is warm, as much as is possible, avoid keeping the cooler in the hot trunk of the car. Remember: Keeping raw meats and poultry (and their juices) separate from other foods avoids the potential for cross-contamination. Use dedicated dishes to keep raw meat separate from cooked meat. Raw meats should be cooked as soon as possible after transporting.
- When it's time to cook, have your thermometer ready. Thermometers are easy to transport

and use. Remember: For cooked foods to be safe, they must reach a safe internal temperature.

- How long have we been eating? Remember the Two-Hour Rule: Food cannot be out (at air temperature) for more than two hours; one hour if it's hotter than 90 °F outside. Throw out any perishable leftovers.

If picnics aren't your thing, head down to the local farmers' market, tailgate with your buddies, venture off to go apple picking – just get outdoors and enjoy all the “feels” of the season – so many great smells, tastes, and textures to be had:

Your local farmers market is the perfect place to enjoy sweater weather and buy local produce. Remember: All food, whether it's from a local farm or a chain supermarket, needs to be washed and handled safely.

- If you're buying meat or dairy be sure it is kept chilled in a refrigerator (or closed cooler filled with ice) to keep the temperature sufficiently cold (40°F or below). Meat and poultry that is exposed or unpackaged, or not refrigerated, should not be purchased.

- Be extra safe and consider these questions and tips for having the best experience at the outdoor market.

- Cheese and meat should be kept cold

- Pathogens don't discriminate: No matter if the farm is large or small, and no matter if the foods are organically or conventionally produced, pathogens could still be present.

Tailgating with friends and family is a fun way to support your team, hangout with your people, and show off your grill-skill. Here are some additional tips for keeping pathogens from crashing your party:

- To reduce the likelihood of cross-contamination, keep raw meats and poultry away from other cold foods and beverages by using separate coolers or insulated bags for transport. If it's hot out, avoid putting food in the (even hotter) trunk of the car.

- Avoid the “temperature danger zone” 40°F - 140°F (where bacteria quickly grow to harmful levels) by keeping raw meats and poultry in a cooler with ice.

- Make 2 batches of sauce: one for marinade (raw meat) and one for basting (cooked meat). Always marinade in the fridge, not the counter. Set aside a portion to be used later, on fully cooked meat.

- Use separate utensils and dishes for raw and cooked food.

- Remember: You're cooking for people you care about, so don't guess on doneness by color or time – use a meat thermometer and be sure.



Kids trick or treating. photo credit: Storyblocks



Apples at Farmers Market. Photo credit: Cindy Kurman

Whether you're picking, bobbing, pressing, or caramelizing, apples are the perfect fruit for a fully fabulous fall afternoon.

- Thoroughly wash your apples with clean drinking water to prevent any contamination (of course, wash your hands before coming in contact with any food).
- Before drinking cider (or juice) at the orchard, or purchasing a jug to take home, make sure it is pasteurized. Pasteurization kills harmful bacteria, such as Listeria or Salmonella, without reducing the nutritional value. Unpasteurized (or raw) products pose a dangerous risk, especially to those with immature or suppressed immune systems.
- Pick the apples off the tree, not the ground. Any fruit laying on the ground is more susceptible to picking up pathogens, and other undesirable toxins. Eating apples from off the ground is not recommended unless they are thoroughly cleaned and cooked.

For more [food safety](#) tips please visit www.stopfoodborneillness.org/awareness/. If you think you have been sickened from food, check this out and contact your local health professional.

For questions and personal assistance, please contact Stop Foodborne Illness' Community Coordinator, Stanley Rutledge, at srutledge@stopfoodborneillness.org or 773-269-6555 x7.

Cindy Kurman
<http://www.kurman.com>
+1 312-651-9000

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Google+](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

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