

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Safely Tackling Tailgating

Coldwater, MI. It's time to suit up! Cooler weather has us tackling tailgating festivities like grilling out of the back of our trucks and competing in a friendly game of corn-hole. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants to help you stay safe when feeding your friends and family before the big game. Once your tent is set up, the hot dogs and burgers are on the grill and the music is playing – it can be easy to forget about food safety.

Remember that it is important to stop the growth of bacteria by keeping your hot foods hot and your cold foods cold. Keep foods covered to prevent the temperature of the air from cooling your hot foods or warming up your salads. It is best to keep your cool foods on ice or in a cooler to keep them chilled. Food must be put away within 2 hours of being out to avoid bacterial growth. So when you leave your parking spot for the game, make sure everything is packed away, even if you plan on getting a snack at half-time.

The Centers of Disease Control (CDC) estimates that each year, one in six people will suffer from a case of foodborne illness, with 128,000 people being sick enough to be hospitalized, and 3,000 dying. So another easy way to prevent E-Coli and Salmonella (common bacteria that cause food poisoning) is to be cautious of cross contamination. Be sure that you are keeping your raw meat away from your ready-to-eat foods. An easy way to do this is to pack separate coolers – one for your chicken, steaks or burgers, the other for your potato salad and veggies and dip. Also, be sure to use two different spatulas and two different plates when preparing your meat entrees – one set for the raw meat and one set for the cooked meat.

Another good tip: Before you pack your car to grill out with friends and watch your favorite team play, be sure that you look up the school rules and tailgating policies. Some schools have very firm rules about the size of the tent, the types of beverages you can consume and how long you can be set up.

To learn more about how to prepare foods safely, check out our website at www.bhsj.org or just stop in one of our locations. We have three convenient, county offices to serve you.

Branch County

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Coldwater, MI 49036
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Hillsdale County

20 Care Drive
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