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News from the New York State Consumer Protection Board

Advocating for and Empowering NY Consumers

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The New York State Consumer Protection Board and Other State Agencies Kick Off 2009 Super Bowl Parties

Even though New York doesn't have a home team in this year's Super Bowl, when the Arizona Cardinals square off against the Pittsburgh Steelers for Super Bowl XLIII on Sunday, February 1, 2009, at the Raymond James stadium in Tampa, Florida, you can bet New York fans will be tuning in and pounding down the snacks! In fact, according to a January 23, 2009 Nielson Report, Super Bowl Sunday is second only to Thanksgiving for food consumption in the United States. Progressive Grocer.com called the Big Game "the most important snack-purchasing day of the entire year," and snack sales are expected to reach \$595 million this year.

Therefore, the New York State Consumer Protection Board (CPB), together with the Department of Agriculture and Markets (Ag and Markets), the State Liquor Authority (SLA) and the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) are encouraging fans to take a "time out" to consider safety before their Super Bowl parties this year.

"Fans are expected to 'rush' the table for snacks and beer on Super Bowl Sunday," said CPB Chairperson and Executive Director Mindy A. Bockstein, "so we are calling for careful refereeing of festivities to assure the safety and welfare of New Yorkers. No one wants to be 'sacked' or 'sidelined' by unsafe food preparation or management, underage drinking or over-indulgence. We are urging consumers to follow our 'Game Plan' below as they celebrate this year."

The Stats

Food and Snacks:

According to the Nielson Report, consumers spend \$594,500,813 on Super Bowl snacks in 2008. The most popular snacks are potato chips, followed closely by tortilla chips, both bringing in more than \$146 and \$125 million respectively, in receipts. Popcorn, pretzels and puffed cheese snacks were also high on the list. Accompaniments such as dip mixes saw an increase of 38% and canned dips saw the largest increase in popularity - - up nearly 25% over the previous year.

About.com's Super Bowl "Fun Facts" reports that approximately 8 million pounds of guacamole and about 14,500 tons of chips are consumed on Super Bowl Sunday; the sale of antacids increase by 20% on the following Monday; and, this Sunday, fans will also eat about 4,000 tons of popcorn and at least 1.2 million chicken wings, among other "party" foods.

But, this year a good defense will be needed to guard those wings due to a reported chicken wing shortage. The shortage prompted Stephen Colbert, star of the Comedy Channel's "Colbert Report," to do a skit called "Countdown to Atomic Disaster - The Wing-Ageddon." But Drew Cerza, founder of the National Buffalo Wing Festival is quoted in the Buffalo News as saying that "On Super Bowl Sunday, the love affair that Americans have for Buffalo wings won't be interrupted," despite the paper's reports stating that prices have risen for the homegrown treasure first introduced at the Anchor Bar in Buffalo, NY.

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker said, "With all the dips, drinks and goodies served during the game on Sunday, one thing to remember is to play it safe. Whether it's keeping cold food cold, hot foods hot, properly cooking in preparation, or storing items after – the game will be front and center, but so should your health. Be smart and play it safe during the Super Bowl by following the Consumer Protection Board's Game Plan for food safety."

Beer and Wine

It's no longer just "Get your *beer* here!!" While consumers purchased nearly 52 million cases of beer during the two-week period around the 2008 Super Bowl, and the Super Bowl Sunday is eighth on the list of highest beer-selling occasions for the year, wine is growing in popularity at Super Bowl celebrations. According to the Nielson data, fans spent 14% more on wine in 2007 than in 2006, outpacing the US growth in wine by 14%.

"The State Liquor Authority wants to remind our licensees to continue to serve responsibly, especially during special events like the Super Bowl," said State Liquor Authority Chairman Daniel B. Boyle. "Licensees need to remain diligent by serving alcohol to only persons who are 21 and over, cutting off those who have had too much to drink, and ensuring those who have been drinking are not driving."

OASAS Commissioner Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo said, "Super Bowl Sunday is a time for families and friends across the country to congregate, watch one of our country's favorite sports and enjoy some of the freshest, new commercials that debut every year. While highly entertaining, many of these advertisements may encourage youth to consume alcohol as part of these yearly festivities. It's a fact that numerous studies have shown these advertisements to significantly increase a youth's decision to drink alcohol. I encourage all New Yorkers to enjoy the game, enjoy but to be ever mindful of the influence these fresh advertisements may have on your children."

The Safety Game Plan:

1. **Pre-Game Food Preparation:** Keep your play clean when it comes to food preparation. The USDA recommends that consumers wash their hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before starting to prepare a meal and after handling raw meat or poultry. You'll be called for a foul if your raw fowl touches cooked items. Keep the work area clean and uncluttered. Follow the instructions for food preparation on packaged items and cook hot foods thoroughly before serving. Meat and poultry including chicken wings, sausages and hamburgers, should be cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli O157:H7.
2. **Post-Game Signals for Food Maintenance:** Avoid foodborne illnesses by assuring that all edibles are maintained at their proper temperature, whether they are hot or cold items. When you're *chillin'*, make sure your food is too! Protect food from cross-contamination after cooking, and eat it promptly. As a rule, leaving cooked foods at room temperature for more than two hours can allow bacteria to multiply and possibly cause illnesses. After the party, leftovers should be covered and refrigerated as soon as possible and should be eaten within three days.
3. **Pass Protection and Double Dipping are Fouls:** During cold and flu season, use caution when passing foods among revelers. Make sure your guests wash hands and never allow people to double-dip the dips!
4. **Red Flags:** Never drink and drive. A recently issued federal study conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, revealed that more than 40 percent of the estimated 10.8 million underage drinkers in the United States received free alcohol from adults, and more than 6.4 percent, or 650,000 of them, were given alcoholic beverages by their parents. Don't let your loved ones become a statistic.
5. **SYDE-lines:** Use Stretch Your Dollar Effort (SYDE) strategies provided by the CPB to help save money on last minute Super Bowl shopping. Find tips at http://www.nysconsumer.gov/syde_page.htm.
6. **Special Teams:** Refer to the general websites of the CPB (www.nysconsumer.gov), Ag and Markets (www.agmkt.state.ny.us), SLA (www.abc.state.ny.us), and OASAS (www.oasas.state.ny.us) for additional resources and information.