



## Tooth-Friendly Tailgating

(NAPS)—Throughout the season, for many football fans, the real game is played on an entirely different field of play: the parking lot.

Tailgating in Wisconsin is taken as seriously as the game itself, often featuring an assortment of brats, hamburgers, pulled pork, chili, chips, cookies, cake, beer and whatever intricate recipe an ambitious parking lot cook can concoct. Likely absent are such foods as apples, carrots and milk that can help your oral health.

Here are some tips for prioritizing good oral health and food options at your next tailgate.

### Don't Punt on Appetizers

No tailgate is complete without a platter of appetizers, including chips, dips, chicken wings and cheese. Small changes to the menu can make for a big difference in oral health.

When it comes to dips, opt for those low in acidity, such as hummus or black bean dip. Acid from food weakens enamel, resulting in tooth decay. Chips might seem like the perfect dipping mate, but carrots, cauliflower and celery offer healthful alternatives that still pack a crunch.

Another easy option is a fresh apple salsa that combines apples, red bell pepper, diced red onion, honey, minced jalapeño, cilantro, lime juice, and salt and pepper. The result is a great fall salsa that pairs well with whole grain chips or grilled chicken.

### Many Options in the Main Course Playbook

Brats are a staple of a true Wisconsin tailgate. If you're as loyal to brats as you are to your home team, consider some leaner alternatives such as Old Wisconsin Turkey Bratwurst and Apple Kebabs, Cher-Make 100 Calorie Chicken Brat, or Johnsonville Chicken Sausage Links (with four flavors), which contain 50 percent less fat. Another consideration is grilled fish tacos that still pack in the protein and other vitamins that promote oral health.

Salads can also be a standout option during a tailgate. Leafy greens contain



**Help your teeth be the winners at your next tailgate with treats aimed to increase oral health.**

vitamin K, which produces a protein that shields teeth from tooth decay. Add in broccoli to deliver vitamin C, which helps protect against gum disease.

### Finish Strong in the Fourth Quarter: Dessert

Dessert is a fan favorite but can be one of the worst perpetrators looking to sack your oral health. "When sugar enters the mouth, bacteria found in plaque converts the sugar into acid. This acid dissolves the important enamel that covers your teeth, opening you up to cavities," explained Dr. Fred Eichmiller, vice president and chief science officer at Delta Dental of Wisconsin. "I suggest dessert options like fruit salad, which pack in vitamins that help you maintain your oral health."

### Drink in Moderation

When it comes to alcoholic beverages, moderation is key. Red wine might stain teeth (but still has health benefits!) and mixed drinks with soda can decay teeth. If indulging, light beer may be the best option, as it is the least sugary and acidic of the three.

Another good practice while tailgating is to rinse your mouth with water throughout the day. Any residue from food or drinks will be washed away. Drinking water will also increase saliva production, which prevents tooth decay. Dr. Eichmiller notes that, ideally, you should drink tap water that contains fluoride to strengthen tooth enamel.

The next time you plan out your tailgate, think about adding some healthy options to the playbook. You could well be smiling and happy that you did.