

# It may be time to punt on your favorite football fare

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(HealthDay)—Fried foods and free-flowing beer may be the norm at

many football or tailgate parties, but the American Heart Association (AHA) says there are many healthier options.

When it comes to meats for the grill, they recommend choosing lean or extra-lean beef burgers and keeping the patties to the size of a deck of cards. Or try turkey or salmon burgers. Instead of fried chicken wings, grill chicken breast strips coated in a small amount of your favorite sauce.

Watch how you season your meats, the AHA says. Instead of lots of salt, use chopped onions or extra pepper to boost flavor. With burgers, use 100-percent whole wheat buns or make a lettuce wrap.

"Have vegetables for dipping rather than chips. Serve plenty of salsa and bean-based dips rather than other high-calorie dips," said Rachel Johnson in an AHA news release. She is a professor of nutrition at the University of Vermont and a volunteer for the AHA.

Vegetable skewers are another great way to snack. Pack them with onions and peppers, or grill corn on the cob or zucchini, the AHA suggests.

Johnson also recommends only eating if you're truly hungry.

If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. "Try not to overindulge on alcoholic beverages. Too much beer, wine or liquor impairs judgment and can cause us to eat more," Johnson said.

Choose no-calorie sodas over those packed with sugar. Water is the best choice of beverage, and you can add some fresh fruit to give it a refreshing taste, the association says.

**More information:** The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood

Institute has more on [healthy eating](#).

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