

Auto

THE 10 WORST FOODS TO EAT WHILE DRIVING

“Driver distraction” causes 25 percent of the car crashes reported to police. While cell phones get a bad rap, they actually rank in fourth place among distractions, according to insure.com, which recently reported results from a Response Insurance Agency survey. *Eating* was a major culprit, topped only by tuning the radio.

In a separate Exxon survey, 70 percent of drivers said they eat while driving. Eighty-three percent said they drank coffee, juice, or soda while behind the wheel. (A handful even admitted to wishing they had a microwave oven in the car!)

With such widespread freeway foraging, it’s probably no wonder that eating plays a big part in single-vehicle and rear-end collisions where the feasting driver fails to stop in time.

The problem, say investigators, often comes with a confluence of unexpected events – a sudden stop ahead or a sharp curve combined with a food spill.

Most of the food-distracted drivers agree. They report it wasn’t the food that caused them to take their eyes and minds off the road. It was trying to mop up a spill.

Mornings are the worst when coffee-swilling drivers abhor ruining their work clothes for the day. Fearing they’ll be late for work, they try to clean up the spill on the go rather than pulling over.

Keeping spills in mind, insure.com reported these as the top-10 worst foods to eat in a car:

1. **Coffee.** Those spill-proof lids aren’t – plus the hot temperature adds pain to the distraction.
2. **Soup.** Same problem as coffee.
3. **Tacos.** They self-destruct even under the best circumstances.
4. **Chili.** It drips and must be eaten with a spoon, taking one hand off the wheel.
5. **Hamburgers.** Grease, ketchup, and mustard are a stain waiting to happen.
6. **Barbecued foods.** Ditto.
7. **Fried chicken.** Greasy fingers mean greasy steering wheels.
8. **Jelly or cream-filled donuts.** The filling often ends up on your shirt.
9. **Soda pop.** Prone to spills, pop swallowed too fast also gives you a nasty nose fizz.
10. **Chocolate.** Since it melts from the warmth of your hands, it gets all over the steering wheel.

Driving a stick shift while eating seems to double the danger (one hand shifting, one hand holding the food, no hand left to steer). The danger increases further when you add yet another distraction such as a chatty passenger, cell phone, or tuning the radio.

