

# HEALTH & SAFETY

## How To Dine Safely When Eating Out

(NAPSA)—Although most wait staff and restaurant personnel are fully trained in food safety today, even some of the best restaurants are capable of committing mistakes that can lead to foodborne illness. If you find yourself at an unfamiliar restaurant, the following tips may help you stay healthy:

### General Safety Tips

- When first entering a restaurant, look around before you sit down. If the dining area or restroom is not clean, chances are the kitchen will not be either.

- Watch to be sure that the wait staff does not touch the tips of your silverware with their bare hands.

- If ordering a hot dish, only eat the food if it is served hot. If the food is lukewarm, it could have been standing at room temperature, which could lead to the growth of foodborne bacteria.

- Where possible, make sure neither the cook nor the wait staff touches cooked food with their bare hands.

- When traveling outside the U.S., ask for drinks directly out of the can or bottle and open them yourself. Avoid fountain drinks or drinks served with ice if you are not sure of the local water quality.

- Don't eat meat, eggs or other raw foods that are undercooked (avoid runny egg yolks).

- Don't forget to wash your own hands before and after eating.

### Food Allergies

Special considerations need to be taken for individuals who suffer from food allergies:

- Avoid restaurants that prepare meals from premade components, as they may not know what ingredients are present in a dish.

- Avoid buffets, as foods can become intermingled and utensils may be shared between foods.

- Check with the cook to see if they can use a separate pan or



**Only eat foods that are served hot. If food is left standing at room temperature, it may grow bacteria.**

grill to prepare your food, as the regular grill could have been used to prepare another food that contained an ingredient to which you are allergic.

- Don't hesitate to call ahead to speak with the restaurant management to see if they can accommodate special needs related to food allergies.

- Check with the restaurant each time you visit to be sure there have been no changes in ingredients, preparation and/or cooking procedures.

### Handling the Leftovers Safely

Lastly, leave leftovers at the restaurant if you won't be able to refrigerate or freeze them within two hours from the time the food was first served. If you do take leftovers home, place them in the refrigerator immediately. They should be eaten within one to two days or frozen if you would like to keep them longer. Leftovers should be reheated to at least 165° F.

For more information about how you can dine safely when eating out and to get other tips related to public health and safety, visit [www.nsf.org/consumer](http://www.nsf.org/consumer) or call (888) 99-SAFER.