

When Eating Away from Home

The good thing about eating out is—you're not in charge of the kitchen—but in terms of food safety, it's also the bad news. You need to trust that whoever is, follows the rules for safe food handling.

- ◆ Check out the environment. Skip a place if it doesn't look clean or you notice poor food-handling habits—like staff handling food while handling money (with or without gloves), eating while on the job, touching their nose or hair and then handling or serving food.
- ◆ Ask that your food be cooked thoroughly—avoid medium rare or rare meats, ask for eggs “over hard”, “hard poached” or scrambled.
- ◆ If your food doesn't seem like it's hot enough or appears undercooked, return it or ask that it be heated more. If cold food doesn't seem chilled enough, return it. Speak up; it's your health and that of your children you're talking about.
- ◆ Before you eat from a buffet or salad bar, make sure “sneeze guards” are in place and that serving utensils are long enough so that the handles (that many previous customers have touched) don't fall into the food.
- ◆ Remember that raw is risky; avoid any raw fish or shellfish, including raw sushi and all sashimi.
- ◆ Skip raw sprouts of all kinds.
- ◆ Forego fresh juices. The hand squeezed juices are lovely, but skip them while you're pregnant.
- ◆ If you plan to take leftovers home, make sure you will be able to get them to a refrigerator within 2 hours from when they were cooked (not when you left the restaurant/party). If it's warm outside, get that doggie bag to a refrigerator within one hour.
- ◆ If you get take-out but can't eat it right away, place in a 200°F (95°C) oven to keep it warm.
- ◆ In all cases, be assertive. Eating out doesn't mean you have to take food safety risks!