

WSGW RADIO PRESENTATION
Spring Break: Tips for Dining Out
March 13, 2018

Dining out on spring break is a nice break from cooking, but a vacation can be spoiled by food poisoning. If you are spending spring break away from home or in a different country, don't let food safety take a vacation as well - follow these tips to reduce your chances of missing out on the fun and sun:

Be your own health inspector:

- 1) **Check for cleanliness.** You can tell a lot about a restaurant's cleanliness without even seeing into the kitchen. This includes clean tables, silverware and dishware; well-groomed servers; adequate screening over doors and windows to keep insects out, and a clean exterior with no uncovered garbage.
- 2) **Check the entrance.** See if the entrance is clean and tidy, then check to see if the menus are clean and not sticky. A dirty entrance and a sticky menu can indicate a lack of attention to detail and a poor attitude toward cleanliness. Check for the presence of flies or insects.
- 3) **Check out the bar.** See if the bartender washes his or her hands between handling money and food items, like a lemon-wedge garnish.
- 4) **Check the restrooms.** You should not be allowed to go in the kitchen, but a quick check at the restroom can give important clues about how clean the rest of the restaurant is. See if the restroom has hot water, soap and paper towels or a hand dryer. This can be an indication if the handwashing station in the kitchen has these items.
- 5) **Open kitchen.** Open kitchens give you a good indication of how the cooks handle the food. Check to see if they are using food thermometers.

Be cautious about raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood. These raw foods may carry bacteria and parasites. You may enjoy certain foods at home like a medium-rare hamburger or runny eggs, but it's better to avoid these types of foods while in a different country.

Don't be nonchalant with food allergies. If you or someone you are with has a food allergy, double-check the ingredients in menu items and alert your server to avoid cross-contact.

Be careful with buffets. Having access to a large variety of foods can be convenient but it can also be risky. Buffets serve large amounts of food over long periods of time, meaning there are more opportunities for food not to be kept at correct temperatures and everyone shares the same utensils, increasing the risk of spreading pathogens.

www.saginawpublichealth.org

Sources: www.easyice.com
www.homefoodsafety.org
www.foodsafetynews.com