




Food Safety

Food Safety and Eating Out

What You Need to Know

- Check a restaurant's inspection score.
- Make sure food is cooked to a [temperature](#)  high enough to kill germs.
- Hot food should be served hot and cold food should be served cold.
- Eat leftovers within 3 to 4 days.
- If you think you got sick from food, [report it to your local health department](#).



Going out to eat? Choose a restaurant that keeps food safety on the menu. Here are some tips to protect yourself from food poisoning while eating out.

Tips to Avoid Food Poisoning While Eating Out

- **Check inspection scores.** Check a restaurant's score at your [health department's website](#), ask the health department for a copy of the report, or look for it when you get to the restaurant.
- **Look for certificates that show kitchen managers have completed food safety training.** Proper food safety training can help improve practices that reduce the chance of spreading foodborne germs and illnesses.
- **Look for safe food-handling practices.** [Sick food workers](#) can spread their illness to customers. If you can see food being prepared, check to make sure workers are using gloves or utensils to handle foods that will not be cooked further, such as deli meats and salad greens.
- **Order food that's properly cooked.** [Certain foods](#), including meat; chicken, turkey, and other poultry; and fish, need to be cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful germs that may be present. If a restaurant serves you undercooked meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs, send it back to be cooked until it is safe to eat.
- **Avoid lukewarm food.** Cold food should be served cold, and hot food should be served hot. If you're selecting food from a buffet or salad bar, make sure the hot food is steaming and the cold food is chilled. Germs that cause food poisoning grow quickly when food is in the danger zone, between 40°F and 140°F.
- **Ask your server** if they use pasteurized eggs in foods such as Caesar salad dressing, custards, tiramisu, and hollandaise sauce. Raw or undercooked eggs can make you sick unless they're pasteurized to kill germs.
- **Refrigerate your leftovers quickly.** Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours of when the food was prepared (or 1 hour if the food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F, like a hot car or picnic). Eat leftovers within 3 to 4 days. Throw them out after that time.

Report Food Poisoning

If you think you or someone you know got sick from food, please [report it to your local health department](#). Report it even if you don't know what food made you sick. Reporting an illness can help public health officials identify a foodborne disease outbreak and keep others from getting sick.

More Information

- [FoodSafety.gov: 4 Steps to Food Safety](#) 
- [You Can Help Solve Foodborne Outbreaks](#)
- [Findings From a Study on Food Safety in Restaurants](#)

Food Safety Features



Read other food safety features to learn more about protecting yourself and your loved ones from food poisoning.

- [How Restaurants Address Food Allergies](#)
- [Dining Out With Food Allergies](#) 
- [COVID-19: How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)
- [COVID-19: When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Protect Yourself When Eating Out](#) 
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