

When on vacation, contaminated food and drink can be a serious threat to your health. The pain and discomfort from being ill, combined with the possible lack of suitable medical treatment can spoil your entire trip.

Foodborne illnesses are generally caused by bacteria that enter the body through contaminated food or water. These illnesses can occur anywhere, even in developed countries. Underdeveloped countries have the greatest number of incidents. Infants and children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with chronic diseases are at higher risk of acquiring a foodborne illness.

The Peterborough County-City Health Unit recommends the following guidelines when traveling away from home:

- < Eat only food that has been thoroughly cooked and is still hot.
- < Avoid uncooked food unless it is a fruit or vegetable that can be peeled. Avoid salads and fruits with damaged skin.
- < Avoid food purchased from street vendors.
- < Avoid unpasteurized dairy products, including cheese and yogurt. Check labels where available to determine if a product is pasteurized.
- < Choose bottled or canned beverages where. Refrain from having ice in your beverages if you are not aware of the safety of the water. Use bottled water for teeth brushing as well.
- < Wash your hands often using soap and safe water. Keep a small bottle of hand sanitizer available.

If you have the space in your luggage, try to pack some foods that you know are “safe” such as crackers, granola bars, candy and bottled water. If given the opportunity, purchase snack foods to have on hand from a grocery store.

Be smart about what you choose to eat when on vacation. If you are ever unsure about eating a food, don't take the chance.

For more information on this or any other food safety topic, contact a Public Health Inspector at the Peterborough County-City Health Unit, (705)743-1000.

For more information on the above media release, please contact Shawn Telford-Eaton, Public Health Inspector at the Peterborough County-City Health Unit, (705)743-1000.