

# Eat, Drink, and Be Wary



It's been said that travel expands the mind and loosens the bowels. One-third of visitors to developing countries suffer from travel sickness, or *turista*. This includes diarrhea, cramps, fatigue, and sometimes fever and nausea. Food and water contaminated with bacteria are usually to blame. Here's what to do.

- If you plan to travel outside the United States, check with the local tourist board to find out if the water is safe for foreign visitors to drink. Often, natives who are used to the local water can drink it with no ill effects, but outsiders experience nausea or diarrhea (or both).
- If you know or suspect the water is unsafe, drink and brush your teeth with bottled water that has a sealed cap. The same goes for making ice cubes, washing fruits and vegetables, or cooking.
- Carry an immersion coil so you can boil your water. Boil the water for at least 10 minutes, and allow it to cool before you use it.
- If you can't boil your water, use purifying tablets, such as Halazone or Potable Aqua tablets, which you can buy at most drugstores and many sporting goods stores.

- Drink beverages served in original bottles, cans, etc. Don't use iced tea made from tap water.
- Don't eat raw fruits or vegetables (including salad). The exception: fresh fruit you peel yourself.
- Don't order undercooked meat. Beef, pork, chicken, and fish should be cooked thoroughly.
- Don't eat raw or undercooked shellfish.
- Avoid smorgasbords and buffet meals, where food is often left out for long periods of time, giving disease-causing microbes plenty of time to grow.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk and cheeses in countries outside the United States and western Europe.
- If your choice of safe foods is severely limited, take a daily multiple vitamin and mineral capsule to supply the nutrients you may be missing out on.

Ask your doctor about taking diarrhea medicine with you. Ask what product you should take and in what doses. (**Note:** Don't take Pepto-Bismol if you're allergic to aspirin. Don't give Pepto-Bismol to anyone under age 19. Like aspirin, it contains salicylate.)