

Outdoor health tips from the Posse:

Avoid gut troubles when traveling

I grew up before they invented healthy eating. We ate fried chicken, fried biscuits, fried donuts, and fried pork chops. If we ate a salad, it was probably fried. Then someone suggested that all the fried food was probably not good for us. Food has since lost much of its appeal.

Many of the holiday seasons were spent back home with my grandmother. That meant I could eat whatever I wanted with very little supervision, especially from my wife. And eat I did, like a kid again. But that eating always came with a price.

My wife told me that it was my grandmother's cooking that was making me sick. I never ate anything fried anymore, except when I went to visit her, and my old gut just could no longer handle it. I tried making the argument that if I ate fried food all the time, my gut would be used to it again, but it fell on deaf ears, and it was soon back to the health food train.

Whenever you travel, be it on a train, plane or automobile, sticking with your normal healthy diet of fruits and vegetables, grains and lean proteins is just not going to happen. Not only is it not a priority when we travel, sometimes it is not even a possibility. When you are in an airport, with just moments to fill your stomach between flights, grab-and-go fast food is the only real choice.

Changes in your eating habits, coupled with not drinking enough water and the general stress of travelling can cause you to spend considerable vacation time in the bathrooms. All of these changes and stresses can cause digestive problems from constipation, to the other end of the problem, traveler's diarrhea, heartburn and gas.

Eating food or drinking water that contains bacteria causes traveler's diarrhea. In other people, dairy



Mark Rackay
Tips from the Posse



Ribeye steaks are great around the holidays, but if they are not part of your normal diet, you could be asking for gut trouble. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/Mark Rackay)

products can cause a bout with it. Whether your holiday travels take you to foreign lands, visiting family, or to celebrations around this great country of ours, there are a few things you can do to stay healthy.

Never consume any food or beverages that are not pasteurized. When you order food in a restaurant, be sure it is served fully cooked and steaming hot. Better to pass on something questionable than spend the next five days sick.

Do not under any circumstances eat anything from street vendors. I once had some shrimp from a street barbeque that looked and smelled delicious. I paid a heavy price for that street meat, completely losing the next two days to sickness.

If you are out of the good old United States, water becomes a question. Try and use only bottled water and canned soda. Stay away from ice. I know that it is tough to drink warm drinks, but ice can be loaded

with bacteria.

Also avoid any fruits and vegetables without skins that can be peeled unless they are fully cooked. If you eat them, be sure you are the person who peels them.

Most of us will not have any problems with food in the United States. Traveling on airplanes can be a problem. Sometimes food has been out too long, or not heated properly. Many times, this is because of delays in flights, and food being out longer than anticipated by the airlines. The best advice is to just be cautious of what you eat on an airplane.

Sometimes your travel just takes you to a relative's house, where they don't eat the same foods or utilize the same methods of cooking your gut is used to. These are the situations that always got me into trouble when I visited my grandmother back home.

When you start to see some of the symptoms of traveler's diarrhea or other digestive upsets, there are a

few things you can do to stop it from getting worse. Start by backing away from all those homemade Christmas cookies (that is what usually gets me).

Greasy foods, high fat foods and anything fried should be avoided. It is also a good idea to stay away from all high-in-fiber foods until your system recovers. No sense adding fuel to the fire, if you know what I mean. You would also be wise to avoid any kind of dairy products like milk, cr me, eggnog, cheese and ice cream.

At onset of digestive upset, stay away from all alcoholic beverages. I know that may be tough around the holidays, but it will only make matters worse. Drinks with a lot of sugar, like sodas, should be left alone. Good old water would be best for a while.

If you behave yourself, and eat and drink in moderation, just tasting the foods you are not used to, generally all will be fine. Overindulgence is what always got me in trouble, especially when you have someone like my grandmother who just wants to stuff you.

Looking back, I am not sure I buy into this whole "healthy eating" thing. My grandmother fried everything, had desserts after lunch and dinner, and had coffee and cake for snacks between meals. She lived a full life into her mid '90s eating whatever she wanted. I am having trouble selling the wife on that idea. ●

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

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