



U.S. Army Public Health Command

USAPHC

Making Safer Local Food Choices During Deployment



Eat
SMART,
Stay
Ready!

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UNCLASSIFIED

Briefing Outline

PURPOSE: To provide you with the information you need to make safe local food choices during deployment.

- Eating Local:
 - What is it?
 - Why we do it?
 - What are the risks?
- What is foodborne illness?
- How do I reduce my risk of foodborne illness when eating local?
- Always follow command guidance!

What are Local Foods?

Local foods are:

- eaten on the economy
- from sources not approved by U.S. military preventive medicine and veterinary personnel
- found off-Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and on FOBs in host country owned and operated food establishments

Do not assume foods eaten on-FOB are from approved sources.



Why Eat Local?

- Local foods are often eaten as part of elder meetings and other counterinsurgency (COIN) activities during which U.S. forces interact with local populations.
- Eating with local populations can serve as an important part of counterinsurgency (COIN) operations.
- It allows for enhanced understanding and learning of customs between U.S. forces and local communities.
- The practice can improve working relationships and trust.



Risks of Eating Local

- Although eating local enables relationship building, it can increase your risk of foodborne illnesses.
 - Those not accustomed to eating local foods may be more susceptible to foodborne illnesses.
 - Local foods do not go through the same approval process by preventive medicine and veterinary personnel as U.S. military provided foods.
 - They are not subjected to the same level of scrutiny to determine their safety.
 - The safety of local foods cannot be guaranteed.



Why is Foodborne Illness a Problem?

- It can greatly impact your mission!
 - Gastrointestinal (GI) illness, such as diarrhea, is common among deployed U.S. military personnel^{1,2,3,4}.
 - Foodborne illness may be relatively short in duration (hours or days) or severe, long-term or chronic, and even life-threatening.
 - The potential for lost duty days, decreased performance, and prolonged illness exists.



Symptoms of Foodborne Illness

- Common symptoms of foodborne illness include:
 - nausea
 - vomiting
 - diarrhea
 - fever
- Seek medical attention if you experience any of these symptoms.

Reduce the Risk

- Educated choices regarding the types of local food you eat can help to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.
- Certain foods can carry a higher risk of foodborne illness than others.

Lower Risk Foods:



Breads



Fully cooked vegetables, beans and rice that are kept and served hot



Boiled or well done meats (lamb, beef, poultry and fish) that are eaten within 2 hours after cooking



Hard-skin fruits and vegetables that you peel yourself (bananas, oranges and limes)



Hot tea



Bottled water or canned carbonated drinks that you open yourself



Higher Risk Foods:

X Milk and other dairy products (cheese, ice cream and butter)



X Partially cooked or raw meats or fish



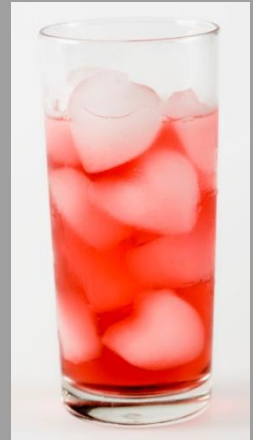
X Raw, leafy vegetables



X Leftovers, take-home, or doggie bags



X Opened/unsealed beverage containers



X Ice, iced drinks, frozen desserts and juices



X Locally canned or packaged products



Always Follow Command Guidance

- Always seek command guidance before eating from sources not approved by U.S. military preventive medicine or veterinary personnel.
- If you have questions about whether or not to eat a particular food, use your chain of command or ask preventive medicine or veterinary personnel.

Use Your Resources: Poster

BE SMART WHEN YOU EAT LOCAL DURING DEPLOYMENT!

MAN, MY STOMACH IS WRECKED!
WHERE'S THE NEAREST BATHROOM?

GROSS, DUDE! YOU SHOULD'VE
JUST STUCK WITH THE BREAD...

CHOOSE LOWER RISK FOODS

- ✓ Breads
- ✓ Fully cooked vegetables, beans and rice that are kept and served hot
- ✓ Boiled or well done meats (lamb, beef, poultry and fish) that are eaten within 2 hours after cooking
- ✓ Hard-skin fruits and vegetables that you peel yourself (bananas, oranges, limes)
- ✓ Hot tea
- ✓ Bottled water or canned carbonated drinks that you open yourself

AVOID HIGHER RISK FOODS

- ✗ Milk and dairy products (cheese, ice cream and butter)
- ✗ Partially cooked or raw meats or fish
- ✗ Raw, leafy vegetables
- ✗ Leftovers, "doggie bags"
- ✗ Opened/unsealed beverage containers
- ✗ Ice, iced drinks, frozen desserts and juices
- ✗ Locally canned or packaged produce

Go to sick call if you have nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or fever.

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EAT SMART! STAY READY!

This information does not replace command guidance. Always seek command guidance before eating from unapproved sources.

Use Your Resources: Sticker

**COME HERE OFTEN?
IT MAY BE WHAT YOU'RE EATING...**

Avoid Higher Risk Foods

- » Milk and other dairy products
- » Partially cooked or raw meats or fish
- » Raw, leafy vegetables
- » Leftovers, take-home, or doggie bags
- » Opened/unsealed beverage containers
- » Ice, iced drinks, frozen desserts and juices
- » Locally canned or packaged products

**BE SMART WHEN YOU EAT LOCAL
DURING DEPLOYMENT**



Use Your Resources: Smart Card



Risk

At times, you may need to eat local foods with community leaders and residents. Eating local allows for better understanding and exchange of customs between U.S. forces and local communities. The practice can improve working relationships, trust and morale.

Although eating local may be good for building relationships, it does carry some risk. Those who are not accustomed to local foods may be more likely to get foodborne illnesses. These illnesses may be relatively short in duration (hours or days) or severe, long-term, and even life-threatening. Lost duty days, decreased performance and prolonged illness are possible. In addition, when eating local food, you should be aware that enemy forces could intentionally contaminate or poison food. Maintaining situational awareness is critical.

Symptoms of Foodborne Illness

Common symptoms of foodborne illness include:

- » nausea
- » vomiting
- » diarrhea
- » fever

Seek medical attention if you experience any of these symptoms.

Local Customs

Being invited to dine with locals is generally considered an honor and is a powerful way to build trust. Cultural sensitivity and tact are critical. Refusing food can offend partners. Always seek command guidance before dining.

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The USAPHC POCs for this information are:

Army Institute of Public Health Water Supply Management Program

<http://phc.amedd.army.mil/organization/institute/dehe/Pages/wsmp.aspx>

Army Institute of Public Health Food Protection Program

[http://phc.amedd.army.mil/ORGANIZATION/INSTITUTE/DVET/Pages/
FoodProtection.aspx](http://phc.amedd.army.mil/ORGANIZATION/INSTITUTE/DVET/Pages/FoodProtection.aspx)

Health Information Operations,

USAPHC-HIOProgram@amedd.army.mil

References

- ¹Riddle MS, Tribble DR, Putnam SD, Mostafa M, Brown TR, Letizia A, Armstrong AW, & Sanders JW. 2008. Past trends and current status of self-reported incidence and impact of disease and nonbattle injury in military operations in Southwest Asia and the Middle East. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(12), 2199-2206.
- ²Sanders JW, Putnam SD, Frankart C, Frenck RW, Monteville MR, Riddle MS, Rockabrand DM, Sharp TW, & Tribble DR. 2005. Impact of illness and non-combat injury during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan). *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 73(4), 713-719.
- ³Sanders JW, Punam SD, Riddle MS, Tribble DR, Jobanputra NK, Jones JJ, Scott DA & Frenck RW. 2004. The epidemiology of self-reported diarrhea in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. *Diagnostic Microbiology and Infectious Disease*, 50, 89-93.
- ⁴Putnam SD, Sanders JW, Frenck RW, Monteville M, Riddle MS, Rockabrand DM, Sharp TW, Frankart C, & Tribble, DR. 2006. Self-reported description of diarrhea among military populations in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. *Journal of Travel Medicine*, 13(2), 92-99.

BACKUP SLIDE

Notes for the Instructor:

- Slide 5: When eating local food, Soldiers should ensure situational awareness and be aware of potential for intentional food contamination and poisoning risks by enemy forces.
- Slide 7: The only way to know for sure if you have a foodborne illness is to see a healthcare provider who can perform diagnostic tests to help identify the cause of your symptoms.
- Slide 9: If you have to eat local, then choose these foods. These are the less risky options!
 - Hard-skin fruits and vegetables include bananas, oranges, and limes. These have to be peeled before eating.
 - Bacteria on the surface of fruits and vegetables can get into the edible parts if it is not washed thoroughly before peeling or slicing.
 - Avoid eating nerve tissue, brain and spinal cord tissue, especially animals like cattle, sheep, antelopes, deer, giraffes, and their relatives.
 - Eat with a knife and fork when possible. This will help to avoid contamination from germs that may reside on your hands or from the things you touch.
 - Examine the food and avoid undercooked portions and unknown entities.
 - Eating boneless meat is safer than meat off the bone. The meat next to the bone should be avoided because it may not be cooked as thoroughly as meat further from the bone.
- Slide 10: If you have to eat local, then avoid these foods. They carry a higher risk of foodborne illness!
 - Bacteria on the surface of fruits and vegetables can get into the edible parts if it is not washed thoroughly before peeling or slicing.
 - Avoid eating nerve tissue, brain and spinal cord tissue, especially animals like cattle, sheep, antelopes, deer, giraffes, and their relatives.
 - Eat with a knife and fork when possible. This will help to avoid contamination from germs that may reside on your hands or from the things you touch.
 - Examine the food and avoid undercooked portions and unknown entities.
 - Eating boneless meat is safer than meat off the bone. The meat next to the bone should be avoided because it may not be cooked as thoroughly as meat further from the bone.
- Slide 12: You may see this poster displayed in locations such as common living areas, barracks, restroom facilities, and health clinics.
- Slide 13: You may see these stickers posted in restroom facilities (on the interior walls of latrines or bathroom stall doors, bathroom mirrors, doorways to the restroom facilities, etc.) on the installation.
- Slide 14: Hand each Soldier a Pocket Card to read and reference.