

SORRENTO TRAVEL CLINIC FACT SHEET

Eating & Drinking Safely

The first important preventative measure is to be meticulous with your own personal hygiene when travelling in less developed countries. Bacteria can be carried to the mouth on hands and cutlery, always wash your hands before eating and avoid putting fingers and thumbs anywhere near your mouth.

The second important measure is to be selective in what you eat and drink. You cannot avoid risk altogether, but you can at least avoid the obvious sources of trouble. Here are some general 'do's & don'ts'.

Do Drink:

- ◆ Boiled water is safe. You do not need to boil it for minutes as was once said. Just bringing it to the boil will kill most organisms.
- ◆ Bottled water is usually safe but do check that the seal is unbroken, as refills from the tap are not unknown!
- ◆ Chemically disinfected water. The simplest way to do this is to use iodine-based tablets drinking water tablets, which are added to water before drinking.
- ◆ Cans of soft drink, especially international brands, are low risk. Local beer is similar in risk.
- ◆ Wine and spirits are usually imported and safe but do not order your whisky 'on the rocks', as ice is to be avoided. (And no, the alcohol will not kill the germs in the ice!)

Do Not Drink:

- ◆ Any other water. Presume all other sources of water are contaminated. This includes brushing the teeth. Use bottled water for this.
- ◆ Ice. Freezing preserves germs; it does not kill them.

Do Eat:

- ◆ Freshly cooked (fried, boiled, steamed) food.
- ◆ Peelable fruits - bananas, citrus fruits, etc.
- ◆ Food of acceptable brands in cans or sealed packs.
- ◆ In well patronised, busy restaurants serving local food.
- ◆ Off clean plates with clean cutlery (consider taking your own cutlery).
- ◆ Food prepared by you.

Do Not Eat:

- ◆ Uncooked, undercooked food or reheated food.
- ◆ Salads or unpeelable fruit and vegetables.
- ◆ Ice cream (unless it is an internationally packaged and labelled brand) and dairy products
- ◆ Oysters, clams, mussels, barbecued prawns or mudcrabs.
- ◆ Food that has been left around exposed to flies.
- ◆ Dishes requiring a lot of food handling to prepare.