

What should I do if I see unsanitary conditions at a restaurant?

GCHD investigates **sanitation complaints** related to restaurants and mobile food vendors.

File a public health complaint by filling out the form at www.gchd.org/complaints or by calling **409-948-2411**.

What should I do if I think I've become ill from eating at a restaurant?

Food poisoning is a common yet preventable public health problem. If you think you're ill from eating at a restaurant in Galveston County, it's important you **quickly** report it to GCHD.

Prompt reporting gives our epidemiologists the best chance of determining the source. When you call, be prepared to offer information about your symptoms, and when they started, what and where you recently ate and if you have seen a doctor. Most symptoms of food poisoning appear 24 to 72 hours after eating the contaminated food.

During business hours, report suspected foodborne illnesses to **409-938-2208** or **409-938-2215**.

If it's after hours, call **1-888-241-0442**.



Protect Yourself When Dining Out

Tips to prevent food poisoning

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE OPTIMAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF GALVESTON COUNTY



GCHD.ORG



Enjoyable and safe

Dining out is typically an enjoyable and safe experience. However, any meal can be ruined by food poisoning.

Restaurants operate under the Texas Food Establishment Rules: a strict set of regulations designed to protect the health and well-being of customers.

Even with approximately 5,500 food service establishment inspections conducted by Galveston County Health District Consumer Health Services annually, it's still important to be cautious when dining out.

REPORT UNSANITARY CONDITIONS:

409-948-2411

SEE ESTABLISHMENTS RECOGNIZED FOR EXEMPLARY FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES

gchd.org/goldribbons

VIEW INSPECTION SCORES:

gchd.org/restaurantcores

REPORT SUSPECTED FOODBORNE ILLNESS:

409-938-2208 or 409-938-2215

AFTER HOURS FOODBORNE ILLNESS REPORTS:

1-888-241-0442

1. LOOK FOR VALID PERMIT

All food service establishments permitted and inspected by GCHD are required to prominently display their permit. Locate the permit and verify it's not expired.



2. CHECK INSPECTION SCORES

GCHD INSPECTION DEMERIT SCORES ARE POSTED ONLINE AT GCHD.ORG/RESTAURANTSCORES. Demerit scores reflect conditions at the time of inspection and *may not be an indication of current conditions*. Reviewing demerit scores over a period of time offers the best representation of an establishment's overall conditions.

3. CHECK FOR CLEANLINESS

YOUR FIRST INDICATION OF A RESTAURANT'S OVERALL CLEANLINESS IS THE EXTERIOR.

Look around on your way in to see if it's well-maintained with no uncovered trash containers.

Once inside, make sure the tables, silverware and dishware are clean. Servers should be well groomed and wearing clean uniforms. Restroom cleanliness also offers insight into a restaurant's overall sanitation.

If these items are not up to par, the kitchen probably isn't either. You may want to take your business elsewhere.

4. BE CAUTIOUS WITH RAW OR UNDERCOOKED FOOD

Raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood may carry bacteria that can cause illness, especially with those who have medical conditions. Proper and thorough cooking kills potentially harmful bacteria. If your food is undercooked or raw,

SEND IT BACK.

5. BE CAREFUL WITH LEFTOVERS

Taking food to go is perfectly safe if you're careful. Remember to refrigerate within two hours or one hour if the weather is over 90 degrees. Eat leftovers within three to four days.