Avoiding Five-Star Disease

Don’t ask your doctor about five-star disease; it’s not going to be in your MD’s vocabulary. It’s on the rise everywhere, from fast-food drive-thrus to five-star gourmet restaurants. This five-star disease is caused by eating out.

I’m reminded of the many people who tell me they’re too tired to go home and make a meal. They grab a friend or a relative and head for the nearest restaurant. Sometimes they bring a coupon. Sometimes they’re after entertainment. Sometimes there’s something worth celebrating, from birthdays to business contracts. Even though I receive many a message about disappointing foods and food prices, the cost and the commonality of going out to eat continues to rise, as does the number of excuses, as well as the allergic reactions from additives.

I could possibly rationalize some of these if the foods were actually healthy and priced fairly—but alas, I’ve experienced, and heard from others, more than a few dining horror stories, some worse than others.

Here’s a tale or two to back up my thesis about not eating out as a rule.

The more recent one is humorous. Let’s examine Lulu, who on this particular day had been working almost nonstop for far too long. A friend called her and invited her to a fancy local restaurant, wanting to give her a chance to relax and forget her troubles. When they arrived, the entire place was decorated and advertising Lenten specials. The two friends secured a place in the busy restaurant, and Lulu immediately found what she thought would be a wonderful filling dinner, something to bring her energy back. It contained shrimp, noodles, a touch of broccoli, and a special sauce. When it arrived, it was pleasantly warm on a pristine plate, and in the very center sat all of three ounces of food—for the bargain price of $12.99! The experience had a way of sapping the fun out of the evening, and Lulu and her friend both vowed to never return.

The second is slightly more complex, involving two reliable close friends—we’ll name them Marian and Brent. Upon entering their restaurant of choice for the evening, they discovered it was busy and decided to get their food to go. The special that day included ribs (with or without sauce), redskin potatoes, a healthy helping of broccoli, and a salad, all for an excellent price. It seemed too good to be true, and it was. The ribs were dark and too tender, likely laden with MSG, and even though she’d asked for no sauce some—aspartame- and MSG-laced—had found its way onto the meat anyway; the potatoes were deep-fried and tasted of what might have been canola oil, and the salad was weak and unappetizing. The broccoli, meanwhile, had somehow become corn. Even so, they were hungry, and part of the food was devoured and part shared.

Within the hour, numerous unpleasant allergic reactions had begun to manifest. The day after, Marian called the manager on duty and asked about what had gone into the ribs. Despite the initial claim that they were bare, the manager eventually admitted that yes, there was canola oil and MSG—all of these facts had, last night, been denied. Without so much as an apology, Marian and her husband were told to not eat there again.

I could continue. I’ve heard endless stories like these, many with worse outcomes, including visits to the ER. Dr. Bieler (*Food is Your Best Medicine)* had a theory about dining out.

Dr. B, near the end of his career, travelled three months out of the year, and not once did he eat out, and believe it or not he never showed any signs of starvation. Friendly or not, the man knew people, and patients he’d treated would often remember him and invite him in for dinner. He wasn’t the sort to call ahead to hotels; he found a place with a kitchenette and stuck with it.

I wasn’t much of a party animal, but even at the time it sounded quite boring to me. My, was I wrong.

Dr. B had a way of repeating words until they stuck. One of them is thus: “Your best restaurant is in your own home.” He brushed aside the idea that vacations weren’t fun without eating out. He loved classical music and word-carving, and traveled throughout the country. He took pictures and whittled. He relaxed and read. All of this without straying from his proper diet. He returned refreshed and full of new ideas. He traveled the same routes each year, remembering the places he visited and the friends he made.

I want you to remember that it isn’t just the foods. I’ve worked with people up and down the food industry, and they’ve assured me that the water served in restaurants is almost never pure—in the worst cases it’s simply tapwater.

I heartily suggest contacting [www.vibesup.com](http://www.vibesup.com) and getting a liquid nature bottle. It will taste better and feel better. Always try to get the purest water you can.

Whether one is a vegetarian or not, nothing is beyond being prepared in one’s own kitchen, even in mobile kitchens and RVs. There’s something to be said for cooking one’s own foods. You might not have the twinkling lights and fancy menus, but it’s quieter and safer. Even when eating out with friends, it is best to tell people about your allergies. People who are really your friends will be okay with it.

I want you to know that, in the last forty years, I have not been able to find a restaurant that didn’t lace its foods with MSG, aspartame, and now higher doses of high fructose corn syrup, all under different and evasive titles. I’ve not seen correct diet combinations in many, many years. I’m reminded of a client I had in the Los Angeles area, an alcoholic who gave up on the drink when ill health beset him. Yet he went on to buy a liquor store, saying he liked being around it even if he couldn’t have any more.

Diets are more than a one-time descriptor. I couldn’t give him a particular plan just because he was a former alcoholic. Diets are a day-to-day thing. We must, as Dr. B said, eat to live, not live to eat.

This wordy saga could go on, but I think you get the picture. Try to avoid those costly toxic meals out—save yourself from five-star disease. You will save money—many who adopt the Bieler-Burch method do—and you will certainly boost your health by avoiding the many known and undisclosed toxins, including aspartame and MSG—2+2=5.

Here are a couple thoughts for the day.

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” – Hippocrates

“Ice-cream is exquisite. What a pity it isn't illegal.” – Voltaire

“We are all here on earth to help others; what on earth the others are here for, I don’t know.” – W. H. Auden

Thank you for your time,

Reigh Parker-Burch

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