

Eat right

Monsoon brings food-borne illnesses. Experts tell **Debarati S Sen** how to keep diseases at bay

The rainy season is notorious for bringing with it a host of viral, fungal and food-borne illnesses that can range from simple cold, cough, and fever to stomach pain, diarrhea, food poisoning and gastroenteritis. Foodborne illness can occur from any fresh or processed foods consumed at homes, restaurants, large catering establishments, schools and institutions.

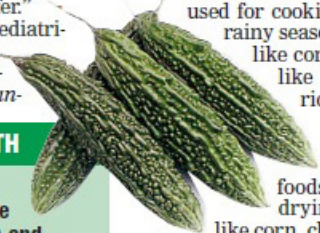
Deepshikha Agarwal, dietician and sports nutritionist warns, "One should be specially careful during monsoon about the kind of food one is taking. Avoid eating uncooked food during this season because fruits and vegetables if cut up and left to stand, lose vitamins and catch up pathogens." Most nutritionists recommend having fresh salad only if it has been steamed.

Clinical nutritionist, Dr Nupur Krishnan says, "Avoid fermented food during monsoon because they propagate gastro intestinal problems. Avoid *dhoklas* and *idlis*. Dosas are safer."

Dr Jayesh Sheth, pediatrician says that during monsoons opting for grilled and *tan-*

THE BITTER TRUTH

Consume a lot of bitter vegetables like *karela* (bitter gourd) and herbs like *neem*, *tulsi* (basil), *methi* (fenugreek) seeds, *haldi* (turmeric) as they prevent infection.



GO THE ANTI-OXIDANT WAY

Have herbal and green tea daily. They are a delicious ways to include anti-oxidants in any diet and can work wonders on your immune and digestive system.

MYTH BUSTING

Diarrhoea doesn't occur immediately after consuming a contaminated meal, it actually takes at least four to six hours to manifest.

— Deepshikha Agarwal,
Dietician and sports nutritionist

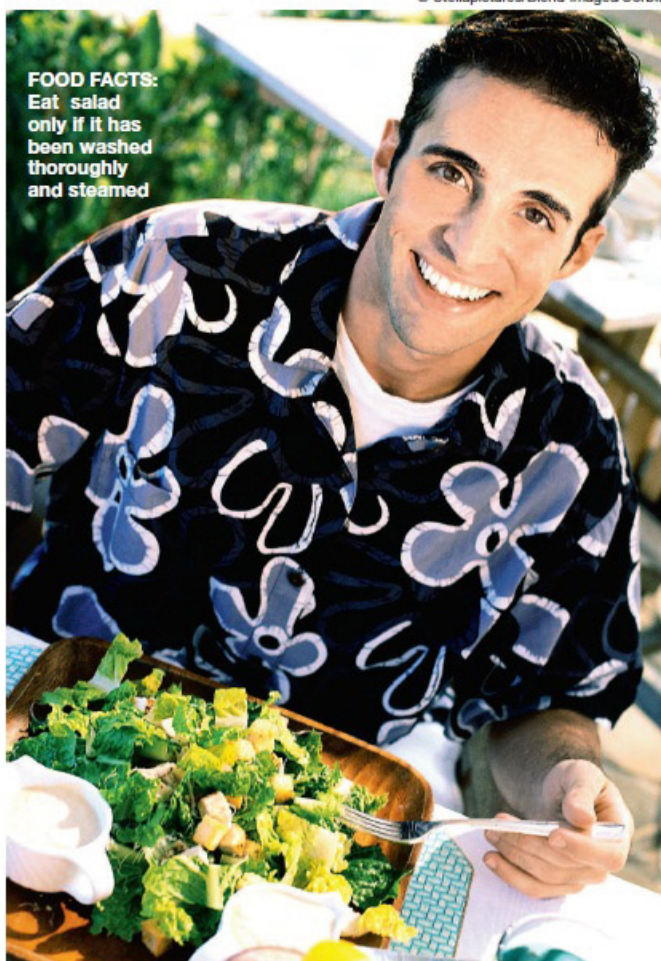
doori dishes is a better idea as they are healthier. Heavy oils like mustard, groundnut and sesame should be avoided because in addition to increasing the concentration of Pitta, this also makes the body vulnerable to infections says Deepshikha. She adds, "Oils which can be used for cooking during the rainy season are dry oils like corn or light oils like olive oil and rice bran oil."

She advises that one should eat foods which are drying in nature, like corn, chickpea, *besan* (gram flour), oats, *rajma* and avoid eating watery foods like rice or curried rice, *lassi*, watermelon as it can cause bloating.

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FOOD FACTS:
Eat salad only if it has been washed thoroughly and steamed



EXPERT TIPS

- ▶ Eat only well-cooked and hot, home-made food.
- ▶ Eat raw fruits and vegetables only if you have washed them in running purified water and peeled them yourself. Avoid fresh fruits which have been pre-cut or peeled and kept in the open.
- ▶ Have boiled, bottled and purified water. Avoid juice, buttermilk, lemon juice, etc. from street vendors. This also includes *golas*, *kulfis*, etc.
- ▶ Avoid raw salads outside as raw

chopped ingredients spoil fast. The only way to kill germs is to boil vegetables. Hence substitute raw salad with cooked vegetable broth or soup.

- ▶ Avoid raw seafood and shellfish.
- ▶ Refuse all dairy products unless they have been properly pasteurised.
- ▶ Be careful about leafy vegetables due to the presence of mud, dirt and worms. Take special care with vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, spinach etc.
- ▶ Avoid re-heated meat dishes.

— Dr Nupur Krishnan,
Clinical nutritionist