

Food-poisoning expert reveals 6 foods he refuses to eat

Kate Taylor

Jan. 25, 2016, 11:02 AM 390,747 51

Having spent over 20 years working on food-poisoning lawsuits, Bill Marler simply doesn't eat certain foods anymore.

The attorney, who's litigating suits against Chipotle after the chain's E. coli and norovirus outbreaks, was cited in an article by Health Insider from Bottom Line, outlining what foods he's cut from his diet.

Having won more than \$600 million for clients in foodborne-illness cases, Marler says his experiences convinced him these foods aren't worth the risks.

Here are the foods that scare this expert the most.

1. Raw oysters.

Marler says he has seen more foodborne illnesses linked to shellfish in the past five years than in the two preceding decades. The culprit: warming waters produces microbial growth, which ends up in the raw oysters consumers are slurping down.

2. Precut or prewashed fruits and veggies.

Marler says he avoids these "like the plague." Convenience may be nice, but, as more people handling and processing the food means more chances for contamination, it isn't worth the risk.

3. Raw sprouts.

Sprout outbreaks are surprisingly common, with more than 30 bacterial outbreaks (primarily salmonella and E. coli) in the past two decades.

"There have been too many outbreaks to not pay attention to the risk of sprout contamination," Marler says. "Those are products that I just don't eat

at all.”

4. Rare meat.

Sorry, chefs: Marler isn't going to order his steaks any rarer than medium-well. According to the expert, meat needs to be cooked to 160 degrees throughout to kill bacteria that could cause E. coli or salmonella.

5. Uncooked eggs.

For anyone who remembers the salmonella epidemic of the 1980s and early '90s, this is a no-brainer. According to Marler, the chance of getting food poisoning from raw eggs is much lower today than it was 20 years ago — but he still isn't taking any chances.

6. Unpasteurized milk and juices.

A growing movement is encouraging people to drink “raw” milk and juices, arguing that pasteurization depletes nutritional value. Marler says pasteurization is not dangerous — but raw beverages can be, as skipping the safety step means an increased risk of contamination by bacteria, viruses, and parasites.

“There's no benefit big enough to take away the risk of drinking products that can be made safe by pasteurization,” he says.

END