

# The hazards of taking children out to eat



HAZARDS OF TAKING CHILDREN OUT TO EAT 30 April Outline Thesis: Eating out with children can be an extremely challenging experience and can turn out to be hazardous, if proper care is not taken. I. I recently took my children to the newly opened Indian restaurant. A. We were greeted by a man and women dressed in Indian attire. B. We ordered chapattis which are like tortillas made of wheat and some gravy to dip the chapattis in. II. Our visit to the Indian restaurant was rather eventful. A. My 3 year old son Nathan burnt his finger when he tried to put the chapatti in his plate. i. The attendant brought a bowl of cold water for Nathan to dip his hands. B. My eleven months old daughter Tracy accidently put her hand dipped in a traditional Indian concoction made of green chilies and mint leaves into her mouth. i. The attendant stood by as I washed Tracy's mouth and gave her a spoon of sugar to help her settle down. III. This experience has taught me to be on guard and careful when going out with children especially toddlers. I also learnt to plan ahead and book seats and high chair for babies before hand. Eating out with children can be a challenging experience. As a parent I have always found it difficult to balance the demands at work and that of the family. I had just finished a major project at work that took a considerable amount of time and energy; so I thought of taking my children out for dinner during the weekend. I thought that this would be a wonderful time to relax and unwind and also spend some quality time with my children. What I didn't realize was that this experience would make me more aware and alert of the various hazards that one can experience while taking their children out to eat. New situations always make me a bit nervous, and this trip to the newly opened Indian restaurant was no exception. My friend from India had mentioned that this restaurant offers exceptionally good service and the

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food served was authentic Indian food. After I parked the car in the elaborately decorated parking lot, I got out of the car with my children. We slowly proceeded to the main entrance where we were greeted by a man and women dressed in Indian attire. They folded their hands and bowed their head slightly and said ' Namaste', which means welcome. The children were marveled to see this sight and responded to their greeting in the same way. The warm greeting we received at the main entrance made us feel very welcome. As we walked into the restaurant, we saw numerous artifacts from India which included, pottery, painting and other art and craft items. As the attendant took us to our seats, we walked past tables that were occupied by other families. Seeing these families enjoy their meal and having a fun time made me feel at ease. We ordered ' chapattis' which are like tortillas made of wheat and some gravy to dip the chapattis in. As we were preparing to eat, my 3 year old son Nathan picked up one chapatti to put in his plate. Even before we could realize what had happened, he gave out a big scream and began to cry. I soon realized that the chapattis were extremely hot and Nathan had burnt his finger. Realizing what had happened, the attendant quickly came with a bowl of cold water for Nathan to dip his fingers in. It took a good fifteen minutes for Nathan to settle down and we all began to eat our meal. Things were not quite easy after this incident. This restaurant did not have enough high chairs for babies and what were available were already taken by other families. So, I made my eleven months old daughter Tracy, sit next to me. Tracy was chewing on a piece of chapatti when she noticed two small bowls kept near the end of our long table, next to the wall. She slowly crawled up to it and began exploring her new found interest. Until then none of us had noticed the jars. In a split second she opened one of the jars and

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dipped her hand in it. Before I was able to stop her, Tracy put her hand in her mouth. The next moment, the entire restaurant was filled with her screams and cries. We were later told that she had put her hand in a traditional Indian concoction made of green chilies and mint leaves. The attendant stood by as I washed Tracy's, mouth. He promptly brought a small bowl of sugar and gave Tracy a spoon full of sugar which helped her to settle down and stopped crying. The restaurant owner came and offered any help I needed and were very polite and helpful during this time. Taking young children out to eat had never been easy for me, but this experience has taught me to be on guard and careful especially when going out with toddlers. Not only did I learn to be more alert when my children are around, I also learnt to plan before hand and book the seats and high chair for babies before hand. I visited this same restaurant many times with my family and friends after this incident. Each of these visits has been much pleasant and uneventful compared to the first one.