

Good Manners at the Lunch Table

Information provided from online sources for The University of Oklahoma,
Premedical Professions Advising Office, Nancy Blass, Coordinator, nblass@ou.edu; 405-325-2457

One reason some professional school applicants are treated to lunch is to evaluate their social skills and see if they can handle themselves gracefully. Dining with an applicant allows admissions offices to observe communication skills and interpersonal skills, as well as your table manners in a more relaxed environment. In other words, they think “Do we want this person to be a colleague one day and will they represent the profession in a manner we would like?”

General Rules of the “Road”

Put your napkin on your lap once everyone is seated; and don't start eating until all are seated.

If you need to leave during the meal, put your napkin on the seat or arm of chair.

When you are finished, place your napkin next to your plate; don't bury the remains of the meal!

Keep elbows off the table, sit straight, and DON'T talk with your mouth full! (Wipe your mouth, too.)

Cut food into small bite-sized pieces; don't “load” your mouth with food.

Remember, you aren't shoveling hay – hold utensils properly (as you hold a pencil/pen); small bites.

Eat soup by spooning away from you – then you won't end up wearing it; don't slurp it either.

Break dinner rolls into small pieces, butter one at a time, and eat a piece at a time; don't stockpile food.

When done eating, put knife & fork into the “4 o'clock” position to indicate you are done.

Relax, listen and participate in the conversation without monopolizing it; don't talk too loud/soft.

Do not drink alcohol – a clear head is best in an interview situation!

Don't forget to say “thank you!”

Key: 1-Napkin, 2- napkin holder, 3-drink, 4-bread plate, 5-butter knife, 6-soup bowl, 7-soup spoon, 8-dinner plate, 9-salad plate, 10-salad fork, 11-dinner fork, 12-dinner knife, 13-dessert spoon, 14-coffee cup, and 15-saucer.

