



Making Restaurants Safe: Paul's Homewood Café

Which is the safer environment?

- Outdoors
- Public space in a hospital
- Inside a restaurant

That really depends on which restaurant. Paul's Homewood Café has taken extraordinary steps to filter its air to eliminate dangerous particles by using the very latest breakthrough technology designed to eliminate allergens.

The science is complicated, but I think it can be understood if you have the time to read this. If not, the bottom line is that the best estimates that modern technology can make all show that this restaurant is probably as safe or safer than any other public space where others are present.

There are basically two types of dangerous particles. All of them are small, but the smallest, which are smaller than 2.5 microns, are the most dangerous because they can travel directly into your lungs and float in the air for hours. Larger particles between 2.5 and 10 μm are more dangerous in one way because they carry a larger amount of virus cells. Current thinking, based on more than 10 years of research into regular flu, is that the total number of particles, which is best measured by their weight, will determine the severity and likelihood of becoming ill.

While larger particles cannot get into your lungs, they can lodge in your nose, and, when settled on surfaces can be picked up by your hands and rubbed into your eyes. Larger particles are also less likely to travel as far, and even less likely to be hanging in the air, as do the smaller ones. The original EPA standard for 2.5 particles was based on evaluating pollution in outside air but it works well in flu prevention, too.

By setting a standard, the government enabled industry to develop high quality testing equipment which has been gradually falling in price just like regular computers. We use two different meters to test Paul's restaurant. The less expensive model at \$70 only provides total particle data, but it tracks well with more expensive units.

The state-of-the-art model, costing about \$5,000, breaks out these particles into different sizes to give you a more complete picture. This is the machine shown in the graphics. That \$5,000 model, by the way, was designed by my brother, David Wells, who is the scientist behind this project. So, let's look at the numbers that we're seeing at the restaurant and the hospital.

All measurements were taken at about the same time, which means that the outside air quality, which can influence the results, was the same. If you look at the small particle counts, Paul's does very well at less than half the number in the hospital. But these larger particles are also dangerous, especially in a close environment like a restaurant. You can see that the restaurant really excelled in that area, beating the hospital by a factor of over four!

Let's be very clear, there is never a guarantee of safety in statistics. But this effort shows that Paul's is doing everything currently possible to make its customers and its employees as safe as they can.

Is that enough? Only you can decide. But rest assured, if there is any way to keep you as safe as possible, Chris and his staff will continue to work to make that happen.

My wife and I have been coming to this restaurant for more than 25 years and have never had anything but the highest quality meals. So, I say: "Come to Paul's; the air is as good as the food!"

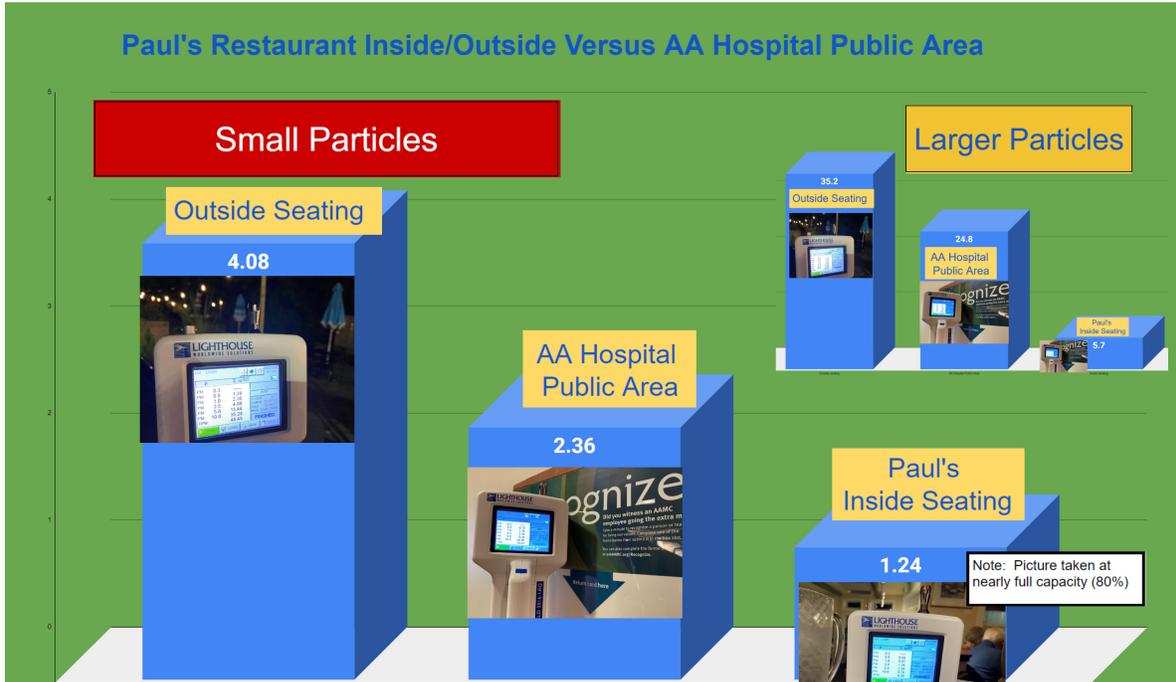
John Wells, Economist, Statistician

David Wells, Senior Engineer in Particle Measurement

Paul's Café

HOMWOOD

Chart: Comparing Air Quality in Three Environments



Note: Restaurant at approximately 80 percent of legal capacity re COVID distancing guidelines. All measurements taken by a Lighthouse handheld meter. They were all taken within one hour of each other, so the quality of outside air does not influence comparative results. Meter readings are used in the above graphics.