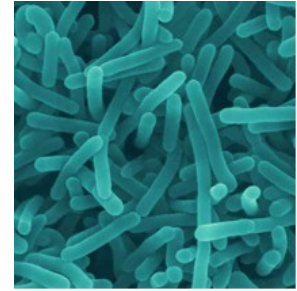


What is **LISTERIOSIS** and how can you prevent it?

Listeria monocytogenes (*L. monocytogenes*) is a harmful bacterium that can be found in a variety of foods. In pregnant women, *L. monocytogenes*-caused illness can result in miscarriage, fetal death, or severe illness or death of a newborn infant. The elderly and those with weakened immune systems are also at risk for severe illness or death from *L. monocytogenes*-contaminated food.



Each year in the United States, an estimated 2,500 people become ill with listeriosis, one-third of these during pregnancy. There are an estimated 500 deaths. From 1999 until 2008, there were 331 total cases of listeriosis reported in Florida; 74 in Palm Beach County.

Listeriosis, also called Listeria, is a [foodborne illness](#) caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*, bacteria found in soil and water. It can be in a variety of raw foods as well as in processed foods and foods made from unpasteurized milk. Listeria is unlike many other germs because it can grow even in the cold temperature of the refrigerator.

Symptoms include fever and chills, headache, upset stomach and vomiting. Anyone can get the illness. **But it is most likely to affect pregnant women and unborn babies, older adults, and people with weak immune systems. To reduce your risk:**

- Use precooked and ready-to-eat foods as soon as you can
- Avoid raw milk and raw milk products
- Heat ready-to-eat foods and leftovers until they are steaming hot
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables
- Avoid rare meat and seafood

You can get Listeriosis from some ready-to-eat foods if you wait too long to eat them. Listeria can grow at refrigerator temperatures where most other foodborne bacteria do not. You can't see it, smell it, or taste it. Only heat can kill it, but if heated food cools, Listeria may grow again.

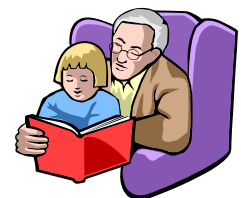
Who's at risk?



- Pregnant women and their unborn babies
- Older adults
- People with cancer, AIDS, and other diseases that weaken the immune systems.

How can I reduce my risk?

- Keep your fridge set at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or colder.
- Use precooked and ready-to-eat foods as soon as you can.



All pregnant women and others at risk should use the following guidelines:

⚠ Don't eat soft cheeses:

- ❑ Mexican-style soft cheeses including: queso blanco, queso fresco, queso de hoja, queso de crema and asadero
- ❑ Feta, brie, Camembert, blue cheese, and Roquefort
- ❑ Cheeses made from raw milk

You don't have to cut all cheeses from your diet. Cheese can be a good source of protein, vitamins, and calcium when you are pregnant.

These cheeses are safe to eat: hard cheeses (such as cheddar and Swiss); semi-soft cheeses such as mozzarella, pasteurized processed cheeses such as slices and spreads, cream cheese, and cottage cheese.

⚠ Don't eat refrigerated smoked seafood right from the package:

This includes salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna, or mackerel, or foods called "nova-style," "lox," "kippered," "smoked," or "jerky." It is safe to eat smoked seafood if it is cooked in its dish, like a casserole.

Canned seafood is safe. Examples are canned salmon or tuna in a pouch.

⚠ Don't eat refrigerated pâtés or meat spreads. Canned meat spreads and pâtés are safe.

⚠ Don't eat raw (unpasteurized) milk or foods that contain raw milk.



Be Careful with These Foods:

- **Ready-to-eat foods:** Hot dogs, cold cuts, lunchmeats, deli counter meats, and other ready-to-eat foods. Eat these foods only if they're reheated until steaming hot. Even cured meats such as salami must be heated.
- **Meats and seafood:** Cook these all the way through. Stay away from rare meat and seafood.
- **Leftovers:** Reheat all until steaming hot.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** Listeria can grow on some fruits and vegetables. Do not buy sliced melon. Wash all fruits and vegetables with water. Scrub hard produce such as cucumbers and melons with a clean produce brush.



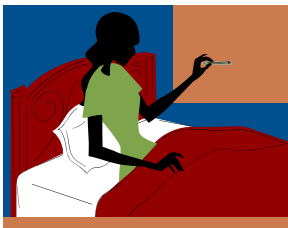
How can I keep my kitchen safe?



- When you buy pre-cooked or ready-to-eat foods that go in the fridge, use them as soon as you can.
- Clean your fridge often.
- Make sure that the fridge always stays at 40 degrees F or colder. Use a refrigerator thermometer.
- Read labels. Follow instructions on foods that must be kept in the fridge or have a "use by" date.
- Wash your hands with warm soapy water after you touch raw foods. Wash any knives or other tools you used with hot, soapy water before you use them again.

What if I feel sick?

You can get sick from two to 30 days after you eat food. **Pregnant women can start early labor if the infection spreads to the unborn baby. Tell your doctor right away if you get any of these symptoms:**



- Mild flu-like symptoms
- Headaches
- Muscle aches
- Fever
- Nausea and vomiting



How is listeriosis treated?

Listeriosis is treated with antibiotics during pregnancy. These antibiotics, in most cases, will prevent infection to the fetus and newborn. These same antibiotics are also given to newborns with listeriosis.

REMEMBER...

*PREVENTION of listeriosis infection and illness IS the BEST PLAN!
PREVENTION saves lives!*

Trivia Question: Where did we get the names, Listeria and listeriosis?

(Hint Who am I?)



Listeria and listeriosis were named in honor of Dr. Joseph Lister (1827-1912) the English surgeon who introduced the principals of antiseptis to standard surgical procedures and, thus, greatly reduced postoperative deaths. His principals of antiseptic surgery are practiced worldwide to this day. Before Lister, a patient was as likely to die from post-op infection as from whatever the surgery was meant to remedy in the first place.

More Trivia...

Listerine® was also named for Dr. Joseph Lister. Listerine® was first formulated in 1879 as a surgical antiseptic. It was given to dentists for oral care in 1895 and was the first over-the-counter mouthwash sold in the United States in 1914. (*Note: This is not an endorsement for Listerine® or similar commercial products.*)

http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/dfbmd/disease_listing/listeriosis_gi.html

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Factsheets/Protect_Your_Baby/index.asp

<http://www.americanpregnancy.org/pregnancycomplications/listeria.html>

<http://www.fda.gov/WOMENS/getthefacts/listeria.html>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/listeriainfections.html>

http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2004/104_bac.html

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listerine>