

What should I do if I ate a high-risk food?

If you have eaten a food that could have been contaminated with *Listeria*, watch for symptoms. Symptoms may not show up right away. It could take up to two months after eating the food before feeling sick. Contact your health care provider anytime you feel sick.

Can a *Listeria* infection be treated?

Antibiotics (medicines that kill bacteria) are given to treat *Listeria* infection in the mother. In most cases, the antibiotics will prevent the baby from being infected. Antibiotics also can be given to babies born with *Listeria* infections.

Where can I get more information?

- Your health care provider
- Your local health department
- New Jersey Department of Health www.nj.gov/health/cd
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov

New Jersey Department of Health
Communicable Disease Service

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PREGNANCY & Listeria



Keeping mom and baby safe!



What is *Listeria*?

Good nutrition is important for you and your unborn baby. But, did you know that some foods can cause a pregnant woman to become very sick? A germ, called *Listeria*, can be found in many foods and, if eaten, the mother could become infected. Most people are not harmed by *Listeria*, but changes in the mother's body during pregnancy put her at high risk for becoming infected.

Symptoms of *Listeria* for the mother may include: a mild illness with fever, muscle aches, upset stomach and/or diarrhea. A *Listeria* infection early in the pregnancy can cause a miscarriage. An unborn baby could even die if the mother gets infected late in her pregnancy.

Although *Listeria* is a serious concern for pregnant women, there are steps you can take to avoid getting sick.

Prevention is best

Safe food handling is one way to prevent *Listeria* infections.

- Cook raw meat (poultry, beef, pork) until well done.
- Wash raw vegetables well before you peel, slice or eat.
- Keep raw meat away from vegetables, cooked foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- Do not eat or drink anything made from unpasteurized milk.
- Wash hands, cooking tools and cutting boards after touching uncooked foods.
- Leftovers from meals should be heated well before eating.

Did you know???

Pregnant women are 20 times more likely than other healthy adults to get *Listeria* infections.



High-Risk Foods

AVOID the following foods:

- Deli meats and hot dogs (OK to eat if they are cooked until steaming hot).
- Soft cheese such as queso blanco, queso fresco, queso de hoja, queso de crema, asadero, Feta, brie, Camembert, blue cheese, and Roquefort.
- Unpasteurized milk or foods made with unpasteurized milk.
- Smoked fish such as salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna, or mackerel. They might be called nova-style, lox, kippered, smoked, or jerky. (OK to eat if cooked until steaming hot).
- Fresh pâté or meat spreads (OK to eat if they are from a can).
- Fruits or vegetables sliced at the store. They may not have been washed carefully.
- Salad bars at restaurants, delis or supermarkets.