

# Listeria

## WHAT IS *LISTERIA*?

*Listeria* is bacteria that can lead to a serious, and sometimes deadly, infection that is usually caused by eating contaminated food.

The infection is particularly dangerous to:

- Pregnant people and their newborns
- Individuals aged 65 and older
- People with weakened immune systems

## HOW IS *LISTERIA* TRANSMITTED?

It is mainly spread by eating contaminated foods and can also spread from contaminated food to surfaces. Additionally, it can be spread from parent to fetus during pregnancy or birth.

## WHAT FOODS CAN BE CONTAMINATED WITH *LISTERIA*?

- Ready-to-eat foods
- Soft cheeses or unheated pre-sliced deli cheese, meat or meat spreads
- Pre-made deli salads
- Refrigerated smoked fish
- Pre-cut melon
- Raw (unpasteurized) dairy products

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF *LISTERIA* INFECTION?

Symptoms vary depending on the person infected and the part of the body affected. Common symptoms are flu-like such as:

- Headache
- Stiff Neck
- Confusion
- Loss of balance
- Seizures

## HOW DO I PREVENT *LISTERIA* INFECTION?

- Cook foods to the correct internal temperature
- Wash produce before eating
- Those in danger of serious illness should avoid high risk foods



*Listeria* can live in cold temperatures, so beware of foods you do not heat up before eating (like ice cream).

## INVASIVE VS. INTESTINAL *LISTERIA* INFECTION

This bacteria can cause an intestinal illness that is usually mild. However, when the bacteria spread beyond the intestines, the infection is then called "invasive".

- Invasive infection:
  - Bacteria have spread beyond the intestines
  - Symptoms start between 14-70 days after eating contaminated food
  - Invasive infection can lead to meningitis and sepsis
- Intestinal infection:
  - Symptoms usually start within 24 hours after eating contaminated food

## *LISTERIA* INFECTION DURING PREGNANCY

Infection in pregnant people is usually mild. However, during pregnancy a person is:

- 10x more likely to be infected
- Infection increases the risk of fetal loss or preterm birth



Learn more about internal cooking temperatures and tips on how to keep your food safe here!



**IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AND ARE SICK WITH *LISTERIA*, CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER RIGHT AWAY!**

