

# What is Listeriosis?

Listeriosis is a serious illness caused by a germ called *Listeria*.

People can get sick by drinking or eating food that has *Listeria*.

The illness can lead to blood and brain infections and may even lead to death.

For pregnant women, listeriosis can cause miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth, and infection to the baby.

## Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Headache, muscle or joint aches
- Nausea (wanting to throw up)
- Stiff neck
- Confusion
- Dizziness or loss of balance
- Diarrhea

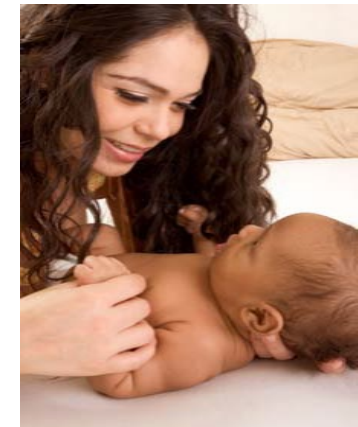
People can feel sick between 3 days and 2 months after eating food or drink that has *Listeria*.



## Who is at risk?

Everyone has an immune system. It is the body's ability to fight off disease and protect our health. People with weakened immune systems are at highest risk of listeriosis. These include people who are:

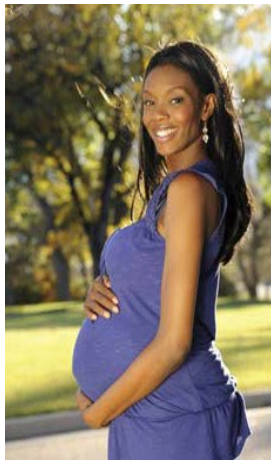
- Pregnant
- 65-years old and older
- Less than one month old
- Less healthy because they have other diseases like cancer, kidney disease, diabetes, AIDS or lupus
- Taking medications that weaken the immune system, such as steroids (ex. prednisone), chemotherapy, radiation therapy, antibiotics, and antacids.



## DO YOU THINK THESE FOODS ARE SAFE?

- Deli meats (cold cuts)
- Packaged turkey slices
- Raw fresh milk
- Raw milk products
- Soft cheese
- Mexican-style soft cheese
- Blue cheese
- Hard cheese
- Ready-to-eat foods
- Pâté
- Raw fruits
- Processed vegetables
- Raw eggs
- Seafood

**IF SO,  
YOU, YOUR FAMILY,  
AND FRIENDS MAY BE  
AT RISK FOR  
LISTERIOSIS.**



## Safety tips for high risk people

Avoid eating or serving raw milk, raw milk products, unpasteurized Mexican-style fresh cheese, soft cheese, deli meats (cold cuts), unwashed fruits and vegetables, and raw or undercooked meat and seafood.

Avoid food from street vendors.

Choose pasteurized food over raw food. Pasteurized food is food that has been heated to kill germs. Heat food like hot dogs until steaming hot.

Prevent fluid from foods like hot dogs and deli meats from getting on other foods.

Wash hands, utensils, and food preparation areas often to get rid of germs and prevent them from spreading.

## CLEANING AND SANITIZING

Cleaning and sanitizing **often** reduces germs on counters and equipment used for food preparation.

Keep counters, cutting boards, and utensils clean by washing them with soap and water and then sanitizing them with a sanitizing solution. Clean refrigerators with bleach solution every month.

The single most important thing we can do to keep ourselves and others from getting sick is to wash our hands.



For more information, contact:

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