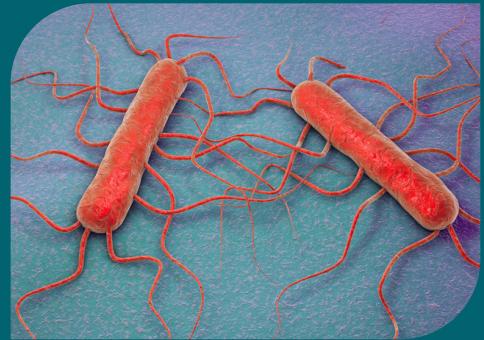


Listeriosis

Listeriosis is a serious infection usually caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. CDC estimates that *Listeria* is the third leading cause of death from foodborne illness in the United States.



Symptoms of *Listeria* invasive illness:

Invasive means bacteria have spread beyond the intestines (gut).

- Fever
- Flu-like symptoms, such as muscle aches and fatigue
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Confusion
- Loss of balance
- Seizures

Symptoms of *Listeria* intestinal illness:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Who is most at risk?

- Pregnant women are **10 times more likely** than other people to get *Listeria* infection ([CDC](#)).
- Adults who are 65 years and older are **4 times more likely** than other people in the United States to get *Listeria* infections ([CDC](#)).
- People with weakened immune systems due to medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, liver or kidney disease, alcoholism, and HIV or AIDS ([CDC](#)).

You can take steps to prevent *Listeria*:

- ✓ Do not eat recalled products. Throw them away or contact stores about returns.
- ✓ Clean your refrigerator, containers, and surfaces that may have touched contaminated food.
- ✓ People at higher risk should avoid eating meats sliced at the deli or heat them to an internal temperature of 165°F or until steaming hot before eating ([CDC](#)).
- ✓ Know which foods are more likely to be contaminated with *Listeria* and choose safer food options.

Listeria can be difficult to fully remove from food processing facilities. If a facility has *Listeria* germs, the germs can spread to food that touches contaminated equipment or surfaces. *Listeria* can also spread from contaminated food to surfaces. The good news is that *Listeria* is easily killed by heating food to a high enough temperature. Foods more likely to be contaminated:



Raw Milk



Deli Meats and Hot Dogs



Cold-Smoked Fish



Raw Sprouts



Soft Cheese



Melons

- ✓ Follow the Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill guidelines.



Clean: wash your hands and surfaces often.



Separate: don't cross-contaminate.



Cook to the right temperature.



Chill: refrigerate promptly.

- ✓ Stay up to date on foodborne outbreaks and food recalls.

What should I do if I ate a food that may have been contaminated with *Listeria*?

Contact a healthcare provider if both of the following things apply to you:

- You ate food that has been recalled or [linked to an outbreak](#).
- You have a fever and other symptoms of listeriosis, such as fatigue and muscle aches.

Let the healthcare provider know if you ate possibly contaminated food. This is especially important if you are pregnant, aged 65 or older, or have a weakened immune system.

