

# Listeriosis (Listeria)



## What is Listeria?



- Listeria is a germ that causes a bacterial infection called Listeriosis.
- Listeriosis generally affects the intestinal tract, blood stream, and other body systems.
- Listeria bacteria are usually spread by eating contaminated food or raw (unpasteurized) milk.



## What to do if you have symptoms:



Contact your health provider if you have concerns or questions about your health, especially if you are or may be pregnant. They may ask you to submit bacterial, blood, or spinal fluid sample to diagnose Listeria.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have other medical conditions or a weakened immune system (such as HIV infection or from chemotherapy treatment) because you may be more likely to become severely ill.

## Who can get Listeria?



Anyone can become sick from Listeria, but it is most likely to infect one of the following groups: pregnant women and their baby, adults aged 65 or older, or individuals with a weakened immune system.

### Foods most likely to contain Listeria:

- soft cheeses
- melons
- raw sprouts
- lunch meats/cold cuts
- smoked fish
- raw milk

## How to decrease your chance of getting Listeria:

- Wash your hands often, especially:
  - after using the bathroom
  - before, during, and after preparing food
  - after touching feces (poop) or garbage



- Keep all raw meats away from other foods.
- Cook all meats all the way before eating.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables.
- Do NOT drink untreated water or unpasteurized milk.
- Be aware of the foods that are most likely to contain Listeria.

## Symptoms of Listeria:



Symptoms usually start 3-10 days after exposure.

### Symptoms may include:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Fever
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion

### If you are pregnant your symptoms may look different:

- fever
  - fatigue
  - muscle aches
- Infection during pregnancy could lead to miscarriage or other life-threatening conditions for your baby.

## Treatment:



People with a Listeria infection should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

Listeriosis can be treated with antibiotics and it is best when taken early.

If your healthcare provider gives antibiotics for a Listeriosis infection, take them exactly as instructed. Make sure you take all the pills even if you feel better.