



Listeriosis...

...is a foodborne illness that is of a particular concern for older people.

Listeria bacteria causes listeriosis. It is found widely in nature. They may be present in raw foods or may contaminate food after it has been cooked or processed. Storing contaminated foods, even in the refrigerator, may allow the Listeria bacteria to grow.

While Listeria infection is uncommon and causes few or no symptoms in healthy people, **it can be very dangerous for people over 65-70.**

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include fever, headache, tiredness, aches and pains. Less common symptoms are diarrhea, nausea and abdominal cramps.

Symptoms may progress to more serious forms of the illness, such as meningitis and septicemia.

Be Food Safe

As you get older, your immune system naturally weakens and your stomach produces less acid. Less stomach acid makes it easier for harmful germs to get through the digestive system and invade your body. If older people get food borne illness, they may suffer more severe symptoms and take longer to recover.



Reduce your risk for foodborne illness by taking a few simple precautions . . .

...Safe Food Handling

- Thoroughly wash and dry your hands before preparing food, particularly before preparing ready-to-eat food.
- Keep your refrigerator clean and operate it between 34°F and 40°F.
- Wash knives, cutting boards and kitchen appliances and dry thoroughly after handling raw food to prevent contamination of cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- Thoroughly wash and dry raw fruit and vegetables before eating or juicing.
- Thaw ready-to-eat frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave – don't thaw at room temperature.
- Thoroughly cook all raw meat, chicken and fish.
- Don't leave foods to cool on the counter or stovetop.
- If you are keeping food hot, keep it very hot (140°F or hotter). Keep cold food cold (40°F or colder).
- Thoroughly reheat food until it is steaming hot.
- Keep stored foods covered.
- Store raw meat separately from cooked and ready-to-eat food in the refrigerator. Store it below other foods so that there is no chance it will drip onto other foods.



Making Safer Food Choices

Listeria is managed by safe preparation, storage and handling of food. Avoid consuming higher risk foods, especially if you are unsure that safe food handling practices have been followed. These tables list some examples of higher risk foods and safer alternatives.

Food Type	Examples of Higher Risk Foods
Cold Meats	Unpackaged ready-to-eat from delicatessen counters, sandwich bars, etc.
	Packaged, sliced ready-to-eat
Cold Cooked Chicken	Purchased (whole, portions, or diced) ready-to-eat
Pate	Refrigerated pate or meat spreads
Salads (Fruit and vegetables)	Pre-prepared or pre-packaged salads e.g. from salad bars, smorgasbords, etc.
Chilled seafood	Raw (e.g. oysters or sushi)
	Smoked ready-to-eat
	Ready-to-eat peeled shrimp (cooked) e.g. in shrimp cocktails, sandwich fillings, and shrimp salads
Cheese	Soft, semi soft and surface ripened cheeses (pre-packaged and delicatessen) e.g. brie, camembert, ricotta, feta and blue
Ice cream	Soft serve
Other dairy products	Unpasteurised dairy products (e.g. raw goats milk)



Food Type	Examples of Safer Alternatives	Precautions
Cold Meats	Home cooked meats	Store in fridge and use within a day of cooking
Chicken	Home cooked chicken	Ensure chicken is cooked thoroughly, use immediately - store any leftovers in fridge and use within a day of cooking
	Hot carry-out chicken (whole, portions)	Use immediately or store any leftovers in fridge and use within a day of purchase
Salads (Fruit and vegetables)	Freshly prepared salads, home made	Wash all vegetables and fruit thoroughly. Store any leftover prepared salads in fridge, use within a day of preparation
Chilled seafood	All freshly cooked seafood	Use immediately - store any leftovers in fridge and use within a day of cooking
Cheese	Hard cheese (e.g. cheddar)	Store in fridge
	Processed cheese, cheese spreads, plain cream cheese, plain cottage cheese	Purchase cheeses packaged by the manufacturer. Store in the fridge
Ice cream	Packaged frozen ice cream	Keep the ice cream frozen
Other dairy products	Pasteurized dairy products (e.g. pasteurized milk, yogurt, custard, dairy dessert)	Store in fridge
Canned and similarly packaged foods	All	Store unused portions in fridge in clean, sealed containers and use within a day