

# Getting Started

## Get Your Community Involved!

Use local organizations or groups to help you get the word out. Drop off copies of the materials at:

- Churches
- Clinics
- Community Based Organizations
- Pharmacies
- Local Mercados
- WIC Centers
- La Leche League offices
- School nurse offices
- Head Start and Early Head Start Centers

## Speak out in the community

Vendors and local suppliers must understand the danger of selling soft cheeses made with unpasteurized milk. If made with unpasteurized milk, the Queso Fresco-style cheeses they are providing to their community may be endangering the life of an unborn child.

## Be Prepared for Some Doubt

It's common for any of us to be unsure about this new *Listeria* information. After all, if someone has never heard of this risk before – or it never happened to anyone they knew back home, where eating cheese made with unpasteurized milk was even more common – it's human nature to conclude that the risk is not real.

## Remind them of these points:

- The risk is real – and could be deadly. It's very possible that it has happened to someone they know and that *Listeria* just wasn't diagnosed as the cause.
- Ever since the U.S. government became aware of this risk, they have been closely tracking outbreaks of listeriosis and the causes. The FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are making doctors more aware of the risks from listeriosis. You may start hearing more about this from your doctor or clinic.

## Presentation Starter Ideas

Here are some ideas for getting the conversation going when speaking with a group. Note: When visiting a home and speaking one-on-one, the Fotonovela makes an ideal introduction to the topic.

- **Say “Cheese”:** Pick up several varieties of Queso Fresco-style cheeses to show to the group. In addition to store-bought brands that are labeled as “made from pasteurized milk,” try to locate a home-made variety without the proper labeling. Use these to open the discussion about types of traditional cheese and the importance of pasteurization and proper labeling.
- **Make it Personal:** Generate a discussion about how cheese was made in Latin American countries and how it's made in the U.S. Explain why eating cheese made with unpasteurized milk is so dangerous. Get participants to relay stories about vendors, people they know, and their own experiences.
- **Share Statistics:** Check with local public health authorities, hospitals or community clinics to see if there are any local statistics regarding listeriosis among pregnant women. Use these statistics to underscore the reality of the threat.

- **Consider a Guest Participant:** In one community, a woman who had suffered a miscarriage due to listeriosis was willing to talk to others and warn them of this critical health risk. Stay tuned into the health news and local conversations to see if there is anyone willing to share her story.

