

***Listeria* Summit: Risk Communication**



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**Office of Communications
and Outreach**

USDA-FSIS

Risk Communication



- Education of the public about how they can protect themselves from foodborne illness is an important risk management strategy.
- People want to play an active role in decisions affecting their lives. Public participation in policy development is critical.

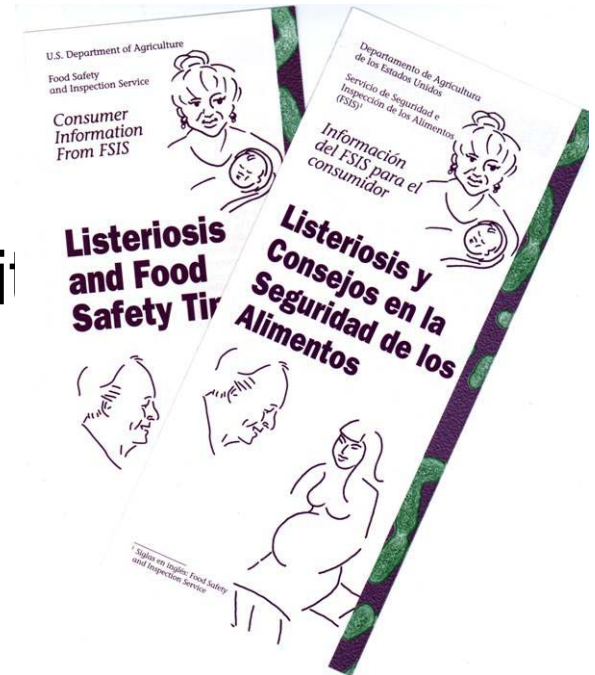
Listeriosis Education



- Listeriosis education began in 1980's.
- Messages must be tailored to audience
- Resources must be allocated to yield the greatest benefit.
- Messages and communication strategies must be updated as new information emerges, and as new communication tools become available.

Listeriosis Education -- Brochure

- *"Listeriosis and Food Safety Tips"*
 - Brochure in English and Spanish
 - Over 200,000 produced
 - Distributed to Educators
 - Distributed to Health Communities
 - On the FSIS Web site



Listeriosis Education -- Media Outreach

- NAPS Article in 2000
- Video news releases
- Targeted outreach

“At-Risk” People Should Take Extra Care To Prevent Illness From Listeria

(NAPSA)—Consumers who are “at-risk” of illness from foodborne bacteria called *Listeria monocytogenes* are urged by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to take extra care when eating ready-to-eat foods such as luncheon meats, hot dogs, cold cuts, fermented or dry sausage, and other deli-style meat and poultry.

USDA recommends these foods should be reheated until steaming hot. If you cannot reheat them, don't eat them.

Who are considered “at-risk”? Pregnant women, newborns, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems caused by AIDS, diabetes, kidney disease and certain cancer treatments.

Listeria monocytogenes is a kind of bacteria often found in soil and water, which can cause serious illness. Illness from eating foods with this bacteria is called listeriosis.

To help reduce risks of illness, all consumers should follow four basic food safety rules: (1) wash hands and surfaces often with hot soapy water; (2) don't cross-contaminate foods with raw meat, poul-



try, and seafood; (3) cook to safe internal temperatures, and (4) refrigerate or freeze perishable foods, including ready-to-eat foods, within 2 hours.

For more information, call the USDA's nationwide, toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline at 800-535-4555, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday-Friday. TTY: 1-800-256-7072. Website: www.fsis.usda.gov.

● Release shown for identification only—not repro quality.

Print Article for Pregnant Women, 2002

- Distributed in English and Spanish
- Potential to reach over 35 million readers

Pregnant Women and Food Safety

Listeriosis and Pregnancy: What Is Your Risk?

(NAPS)—When eating for two, you need to pay close attention to food safety, as well as nutrition. Food can contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness.

One type of bacteria found in the environment, *Listeria monocytogenes*, can cause a foodborne illness called listeriosis. CDC estimates about 2,500 people become ill from listeriosis each year and that 1 in 5 die from the disease. Pregnant women are about 20 times more likely than other healthy adults to become infected.

Here are answers to some questions about listeriosis and pregnancy from USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service:

Q: Why is listeriosis dangerous for me and my child?

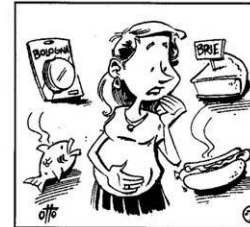
A: Hormonal changes during pregnancy have an effect on the mother's immune system that lead to an increased susceptibility to listeriosis in the mother. It can be transmitted to the fetus through the placenta even if the mother is not showing signs of illness. This can lead to premature delivery, miscarriage, stillbirth, or serious health problems for her newborn.

Q: What are the symptoms?

A: Symptoms can take a few days or even weeks to appear and can be mild, so you may not even know you have it. In pregnant women, listeriosis may cause flu-like symptoms with the sudden onset of fever, chills, muscle aches, and sometimes diarrhea or upset stomach. If the infection spreads to the nervous system, symptoms may include headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, or convulsions. If you have these symptoms, see your doctor. A blood test can determine if you have listeriosis.

Q: How can I prevent listeriosis?

A: Do not eat hot dogs, lunch-



Being aware of food safety can help protect you and your baby from listeriosis.

meat, or deli meats **unless they are reheated** until steaming hot. **Do not eat** soft cheeses, such as feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined cheese, and Mexican-style cheeses or refrigerated paté and meat spreads. **Do not eat** refrigerated smoked seafood including salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna, and mackerel **unless** it is an ingredient in a **cooked dish**. **Do not drink** raw unpasteurized milk or eat foods that contain unpasteurized milk.

Use all perishable items that are precooked and ready-to-eat as soon as possible. Clean your refrigerator regularly and make sure it always stays at 40°F or below. When preparing meals, wash hands and surfaces often; don't allow cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods; cook to proper temperatures; and refrigerate or freeze promptly.

For a copy of the fact sheet "Listeriosis and Pregnancy: What is Your Risk?" e-mail your name and address to fsis.outreach@usda.gov.

For more food safety information, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555; for the hearing impaired 1-800-256-7072 (TTY); www.fsis.usda.gov.

is y el Embarazo: ¿Cuál es su riesgo?

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acteria que se edio ambiente, la nes, puede ocadad transmitida llamada listeria ara el Control y Enfermedades inglés) estiman ca de 2,500 per de listeriosis y fallece a conse-fermedad. Las das son 20 veces de contraer liste- adultos en buen



Ser consciente de la seguridad en los alimentos puede ayudar a protegerla a usted y a su bebé de la listeriosis.

P: ¿Cómo puedo prevenir la listeriosis?

R: No coma "hotdogs", fiambres, embutidos u otras carnes de la fiambrería, salvo que los caliente hasta que emitan vapor. No coma quesos blandos tales como feta, Brie, Camembert, quesos con vetas azules o al estilo mexicano, o patés y pasta a base de carne, listas para untar, que hayan estado refrigerados. No coma pescados ni mariscos ahumados refrigerados, como salmón, trucha, esturión, bacalao, atún y caballa, excepto si son ingredientes de un plato cocido. No beba leche cruda sin pasteurizar, ni coma alimentos que contengan leche sin pasteurizar.

Utilice los alimentos perecederos precocidos y listos para el consumo a la mayor brevedad posible. Limpie su refrigerador regularmente y asegúrese de que mantiene una temperatura de 40°F o menor. Cuando prepare las comidas, lávese las manos y lave las superficies donde prepara los alimentos a menudo; no permita la contaminación de los alimentos cocidos por los crudos; cueza los alimentos a las temperaturas adecuadas y refrigérelos o congélelos de inmediato.

Para obtener una copia del artículo "La Listeriosis y el Embarazo: ¿Cuál es su riesgo?" envíe por correo electrónico su nombre y dirección a fsis.outreach@usda.gov.

Para mayor información sobre inocuidad alimentaria, llame a la Línea de Información Sobre Carnes y Aves del USDA al teléfono 1-800-535-4555; si tiene problemas de audición llame al número 1-800-256-7072 (TTY); correo electrónico a <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

Outreach to Educators

- Presentations and Conference Exhibits
- Electronic Mail Lists




Outreach by Other Agencies



- **Food and Nutrition Service**
 - Placement in WIC offices, school nurses
- **Cooperative State Extension and Education Service**
 - State Program Leaders and County Educators

Listeria monocytogenes

Contents



From USDA

- [Latest News](#)
- [Email News Items](#)
- [Backgrounders](#)
- [Consumer Information](#)
- [Consumer Research](#)
- [Federal Register](#)
- [Guidance Documents](#)

For more information about *Listeria* and listeriosis

- [From CDC](#)
- [From the IMHA/IR](#)

For more information about foodborne bacteria

- [FDA \(Eld Bug Book\)](#)
- [Fight BAC!®](#) (Partnership for Food Safety Education)

File Formats

*Note: To read and print a PDF file, you must have the [Adobe® Acrobat® Reader](#) installed on your PC. You can download a version suitable for your system, free of charge, from the Adobe Home Page. Adobe also provides tools and information to help make Adobe PDF files accessible to users with visual disabilities at <http://access.adobe.com>

Latest News

- [USDA Advice on Preventing Illness from *Listeria*](#) (Video) from QING (China)
- [USDA Provides Update on *Listeria* Recall](#) (October 17, 2002) [USDA](#)
- [Public Health Update: FSIS Continues To Investigate *Listeria* Illnesses](#) (October 2, 2002)
- [USDA To Host *Listeria* Meeting](#) (September 11, 2002)
- [FSIS Adopts New Screening Method For *Listeria monocytogenes*](#) (April 30, 2002)
- [Past News Items](#)

Listeria Recalls (Current Calendar Year)

- [Pennsylvania Firm Expands Recall Of Turkey And Chicken Products For Possible *Listeria* Contamination](#) (October 13, 2002)
- [Hawaii Firm Recalls Pork Dandelings For Possible *Listeria* Contamination](#) (October 11, 2002)
- [Pennsylvania Firm Recalls Turkey And Chicken Products For Possible *Listeria* Contamination](#) (October 9, 2002) [also available as a 7-page [EDE file](#)]
- [Indiana Firm Recalls Ham For Possible *Listeria* Contamination](#) (October 8, 2002)
- [More - Click Bulletin to expand or contract list \(Works in Internet Explorer\)](#)
- [All Recall Press Releases](#)

Backgrounders

- [Key Facts: BAX](#), April 2002
- [FSIS Action Plan for Addressing *Listeria monocytogenes*](#), May 1999
- [FSIS Strategies for Addressing *Listeria monocytogenes*](#), February 1999

Consumer Information from FSIS

Pregnancy

- [Listeriosis and Pregnancy: What is Your Risk?](#) Patient Education Sheet (also available in [EDE](#)*)
- Spanish version: *La Listeriosis y el Embarazo: ¿Cuál es su riesgo?* [\[EDE\]](#) or [\[text\]](#)
- [Newspaper \(NAPS\) Features in English and Spanish](#)

General

FSIS Web site

- Specific *Listeria* Page on the Web site
- Brochures in full text on the site
- Outreach efforts encourage links to page

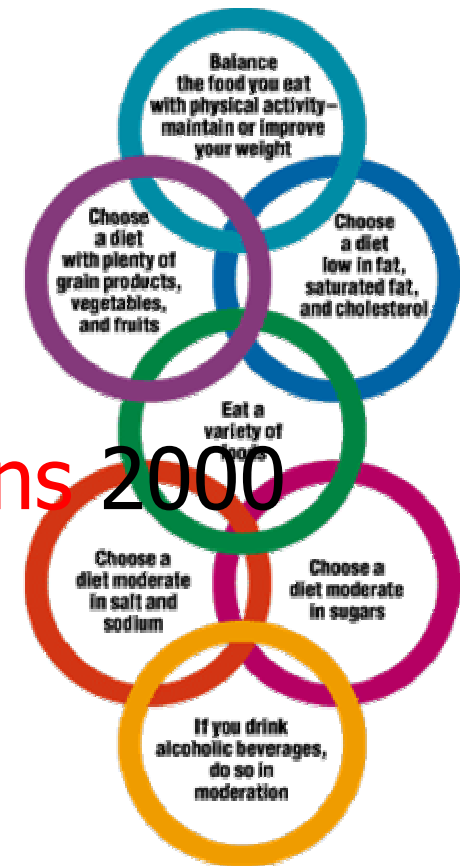


Other National Initiatives Support At-Risk Messages

■ Healthy People 2010

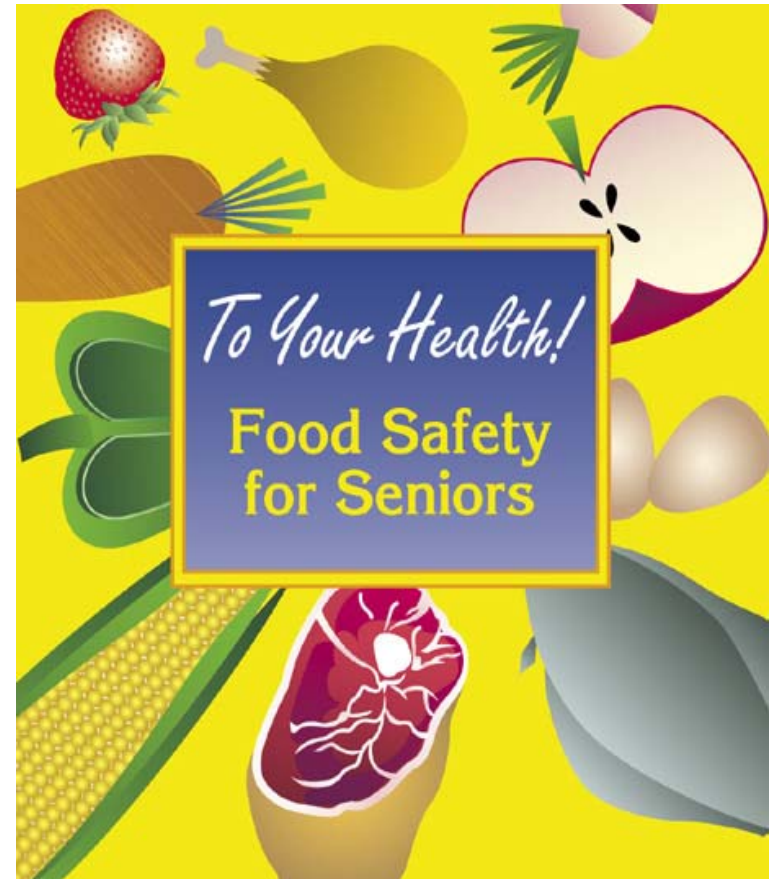


■ Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000



Education Package for Seniors

- Video and Brochure
- Distribution to Senior Centers and Educators



Physicians Primer includes information on Lm



Listeria Facts for Pregnant Women

- Tear-pads of 25 sheets for doctor's offices
- Over 220,000 pads distributed to date

Listeriosis and Pregnancy: What is Your Risk?

Information provided by:
Association of Women's Health
Nurses, and Neonatal Nurses
(AWHNN)
International Food Information
Council (IFIC) Foundation
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(USDA)
U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services (DHHS)

Safe Food Handling for a Healthy Pregnancy

When you're expecting, it's natural to be concerned about your health - and that of your unborn baby. Maintaining a healthful diet, drinking plenty of liquids, and taking prenatal vitamins are all important for the health of the expectant mother and her baby. Food safety is also very important. This information will help you make safe decisions when selecting and preparing food for yourself and/or your family.

Sometimes, what we eat can make us sick. Food contaminated by harmful bacteria can cause serious illness. One type of bacteria, *Listeria monocytogenes* (pronounced list-er-ee-ya mon-o-si-TAI-gin-eez), can cause an illness called listeriosis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 2,500 people become seriously ill with listeriosis each year in the United States. Of these, one in five die from the disease. Listeriosis can be particularly dangerous for pregnant women and their unborn babies. Foodborne illness caused by *Listeria* in pregnant women can result in premature delivery, miscarriage, fetal death, and severe illness or death of a newborn from the infection.

What is Listeria?
Listeria is a type of bacteria found everywhere - in soil and ground water and on plants. Animals and people can carry *Listeria* in their bodies without becoming sick. Despite being so widespread, most infections in humans result from eating contaminated foods.

Most people are not at increased risk for listeriosis. However, there are some people who are considered "at risk" because they are more susceptible to listeriosis. In addition to pregnant women and their unborn babies and newborns, other "at-risk" groups include older adults and people with weakened immune systems caused by cancer treatments, AIDS, diabetes, kidney disease, etc. By carefully following food safety precautions, persons at risk for listeriosis can substantially reduce their chances of becoming ill.

Why is listeriosis especially dangerous for me and my child?
Hormonal changes during pregnancy have an effect on the mother's immune system that lead to an increased susceptibility to listeriosis in the mother. According to the

CDC, pregnant women are about 20 times more likely than other healthy adults to get listeriosis. In fact, about one-third of listeriosis cases happen during pregnancy. Listeriosis can be transmitted to the fetus through the placenta even if the mother is not showing signs of illness. This can lead to premature delivery, miscarriage, stillbirth, or serious health problems for her newborn.

Is Listeria transmitted from the mother to the baby through breast milk?
While there is a theoretical possibility that *Listeria monocytogenes* could be transmitted via mother's milk, this has never been proven.

How will I know if I have listeriosis?
Because the symptoms of listeriosis can take a few days or even weeks to appear and can be mild, you may not even know you have it. This is why it's very important to take appropriate food safety precautions during pregnancy.

In pregnant women, listeriosis may cause flu-like symptoms with the sudden onset of fever, chills, muscle aches, and sometimes diarrhea or upset stomach. The severity of the

symptoms may vary. If the infection spreads to the nervous system, the symptoms may include headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, or convulsions. Consult your doctor or healthcare provider if you have these symptoms. A blood test can be performed to find out if your symptoms are caused by listeriosis.

What is the treatment for listeriosis?
During pregnancy, antibiotics are given to treat listeriosis in the mother. In most cases, the antibiotics also prevent infection of the fetus or newborn. Antibiotics are also given to babies who are born with listeriosis.

What steps can I take to prevent listeriosis?
USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provide the following advice for pregnant women and all "at-risk" consumers:

www.ifiic.org
International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation
http://ifiic.org



AWHNN
Association of Women's Health Nurses and Neonatal Nurses
www.awhnn.org

Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov

Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov



USDA
U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation
http://ifiic.org

September 2010

Fight BAC!



What should I do if I've eaten a food that has been recalled because of Listeria contamination?
If you have eaten a contaminated product and do not have any symptoms, most experts believe you don't need any tests or treatment, even if you are pregnant. However, you should inform your physician or healthcare provider if you are pregnant and have eaten the contaminated product, and within 2 months experience flu-like symptoms.

It's important to learn how to protect yourself and your unborn baby from foodborne illnesses. Getting in the habit of eating a safe and nutritious diet not only benefits your baby, but will also give you peace of mind.

Remember - new information on food safety is constantly emerging. Recommendations and precautions are updated as scientists learn more about preventing foodborne illness. You need to be aware of and follow the most current information on food safety. Consult your healthcare provider if you have questions.



When preparing meals for yourself and/or your family, it is important to remember these four basic guidelines to help keep your food safe from harmful bacteria.

- 1. Clean**
Wash hands and surfaces often
- 2. Separate**
Don't allow cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods
- 3. Cook**
Cook to proper temperature - use a food thermometer
- 4. Chill**
Refrigerate or freeze promptly



Continuing Outreach Activities



- Aggressive Outreach to Medical Community
- Aggressive Outreach to Targeted Media
- Continue to work with FNS to Reach Food Program Participants
- Developing a low-literacy brochure
- Targeting Hispanic communities
- Exploring creation of materials in other languages

Public Participation in Policy Decisions



- Public should have the opportunity to provide input into policy decision-making process.
- Helps to ensure that policies have public support.
- Public meetings

Public Participation in Policy Decisions



- Risk communication function will have greater focus in FSIS.
- Need an organized framework for risk communication.
- More fully integrate risk communication into the risk analysis framework.