

Fast Facts

Listeria

- A bacterium that is found in soil, water, and animal feces
- Can contract it if you eat raw vegetables that have been contaminated from the soil or manure used as fertilizer, contaminated meat, unpasteurized milk or foods made with unpasteurized milk, and certain processed foods
 - Unborn babies can contract it from their mothers
- It's important to note that listeria can survive refrigeration and freezing
 - Healthy people don't usually become sick when infected
- Issue for pregnant women, individuals over 65, and those with a weakened immune system
- Symptoms usually appear a few days after ingesting contaminated food but can take as long as 30 days or more to show up

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Healthy People:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Usually none <p><i>Common:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fever -Chills -Muscle aches -Nausea -Diarrhea <p><i>If spreads to nervous system:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Headache -Stiff neck -Loss of balance -Confusion -Changes in alertness -Convulsions <p><i>Newborns:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Little interest in feeding -Irritability -Fever -Vomiting -Difficulty breathing 	<p><i>Mild:</i></p> <p>None</p> <p><i>Severe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Antibiotics (esp. for pregnant women) 	<p><i>Wash your hands:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Frequently and thoroughly -Use warm water and soap -For at least 20 seconds -Do this before and after handling/preparing food <p><i>Other tips:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clean all utensils, cutting boards, and food prep areas with hot, soapy water -Clean all raw fruits and vegetables with water (use a scrub brush.) -Make sure all of your food is cooked to a safe temperature (use a food thermometer) <p><i>Higher-risk individuals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Avoid soft cheeses, like feta, brie, Camembert, blue cheese, or Mexican-style cheeses (ex. queso blanco and queso fresco). -Avoid hot dogs and deli meats unless they're reheated until steaming hot (keep fluid from packages away from other foods, utensils, and food preparation surfaces) -Don't eat refrigerated meat spreads. -Avoid smoked seafood, such as anything labeled nova style, lox, kippered, or jerky -If you eat sprouts, make sure they are thoroughly cooked

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