



# Protect your pregnancy from *Listeria*

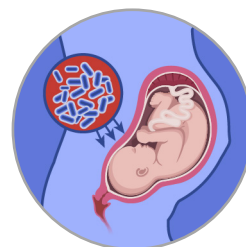
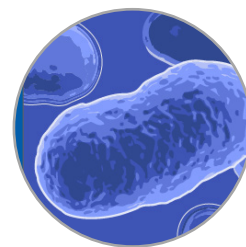
***Listeria* is a harmful germ that can be in some food.**

***Listeria* illness is rare.**

Every year, **4 in 100,000** pregnant women in the U.S. get sick with *Listeria*.

**But it can harm your baby.**

Sadly, 1 in 4 pregnant women who get this illness lose their pregnancy or their baby shortly after birth. That's because **the germ can spread to your baby** and harm them while you are pregnant, even if you don't feel very sick.



## You can take steps to protect your baby.



**Choose safer food options.** See the next page for foods not to eat and foods to choose instead.

**Check for recalled foods** contaminated with *Listeria*:  
[www.foodsafety.gov/recalls-and-outbreaks](http://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls-and-outbreaks)



**Call your healthcare provider right away** if you have a fever and feel more tired and achy than normal. Let them know if you ate a recalled food in the past two months or are worried about something you ate. (This is because *Listeria* illness can sometimes start many weeks later.) Early treatment can help save your baby.



[www.cdc.gov/listeria](http://www.cdc.gov/listeria)

# Choose safer foods to protect your pregnancy from *Listeria*

*Listeria* is a harmful germ that can be in food. It can cause pregnancy loss or hurt your baby. The good news is that you can choose safer food options to protect your baby during your pregnancy.

## Quick guide to safer food options

**Listeria can grow at cold temperatures in refrigerators, but it is easily killed by heat.**

In general, foods that are safer include:

**Cooked or reheated foods** that reach a high enough temperature for germs to be killed. (You can let the food cool before eating.)

**Shelf-stable foods** are heated or dried to kill germs that can cause illness or spoil food. They are in sealed cans, jars, or pouches that do not need to be refrigerated until opened.

**Pasteurized foods** are heated to a high enough temperature for a long enough time to kill germs.

| Food                                 | Avoid  | Choose these instead   |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Cheese</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any unheated queso fresco-type cheeses, when made with pasteurized or unpasteurized (raw) milk, such as queso fresco, or similar fresh, soft cheeses such as queso blanco and requesón</li><li>Any type of cheese made with unpasteurized (raw) milk</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hard cheeses, when made with pasteurized milk, such as Asiago, Cheddar, Parmesan, or Swiss/Gruyere/Emmental</li><li>Cottage cheese, cream cheese, string cheese, feta, and mozzarella, when made with pasteurized milk</li><li>Heated queso fresco-type cheeses or heated unpasteurized (raw) milk cheeses, to 165°F or until steaming hot</li></ul> |
| <b>Deli meat</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unheated deli meat, cold cuts, hot dogs, and fermented or dry sausages</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deli meat, cold cuts, hot dogs, and fermented or dry sausages reheated to 165°F or until steaming hot</li></ul>  |
| <b>Deli salads</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Premade deli salads, such as coleslaw and potato, tuna, or chicken salad</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Homemade deli salads</li></ul>   |
| <b>Pâté &amp; meat spreads</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Refrigerated pâté or meat spreads</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Shelf-stable pâté or meat spreads</li></ul>  |
| <b>Smoked fish</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Refrigerated smoked fish</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Shelf-stable smoked fish</li><li>Smoked fish cooked in a casserole or other cooked dishes</li></ul>  |
| <b>Sprouts</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Raw or lightly cooked sprouts</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sprouts cooked until steaming hot</li></ul>  |
| <b>Melon</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cut melon left out for more than 2 hours (1 hour if it's exposed to temperatures above 90°F)</li><li>Cut melon in refrigerator for more than a week</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Melon that has just been cut</li></ul>   |
| <b>Milk, yogurt, &amp; ice cream</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Raw (unpasteurized) milk, yogurt, and ice cream</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pasteurized milk, yogurt, and ice cream</li></ul>  |



Scan the QR code to learn why some foods are riskier.

For other food safety and nutrition advice during pregnancy, visit [www.myplate.gov/life-stages/pregnancy-and-breastfeeding](http://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/pregnancy-and-breastfeeding).

