

FACT SHEET

Listeriosis

Listeriosis (Listeria) is caused by a bacteria called *listeriosis monocytogenes*. People usually become ill with listeriosis after eating contaminated food. The disease primarily affects pregnant women and their fetus and newborns. Older adults and others with weak immune systems such those having cancer, diabetes and kidney disease, are also at risk. Rarely do other people get sick with *Listeria* infection. <https://www.cdc.gov/listeria/index.html>

Symptoms: Symptoms can include fever, chills, nausea, diarrhea, muscle aches, stiff neck, and sensitivity to light. People may also have confusion, loss of balance and drowsiness. **Pregnant women:** usually only have a fever and other flu-like symptoms, such as fatigue and muscle aches. But infections during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, or life-threatening infection of the newborn.

Spread: People get Listeria by eating food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. If infection occurs during pregnancy, *Listeria* bacteria can spread to the baby through the placenta.

Incubation: Illness can begin within three weeks, but symptoms can begin with a few days after exposure to the bacteria and up to two months after being exposed.

Contagious Period: An infected person is not contagious to others, although a pregnant woman is able to pass it to her baby.

Precautions: People with weakened immune systems, pregnant women and their babies, those with cancer, diabetes, or kidney failure are at greater risk for this disease.

Reportable: Within seven days by the provider or laboratory to the state or local health department.

Diagnosis and Treatment: The physician will order laboratory test. Diagnosis may be confirmed by culturing body tissue or fluid such as blood, spinal fluid, or the placenta.

Prevention: The best way to prevent the spread *Listeriosis* is by knowing what types of foods are more at risk for the bacteria, and if you are pregnant, avoiding foods like cold meats, hot dogs, raw sprouts, queso fresco and other soft, unpasteurized cheeses. <https://www.cdc.gov/listeria/prevention.html>. Please inform medical providers or public health officials if you have traveled in the last two weeks or have been on a cruise.