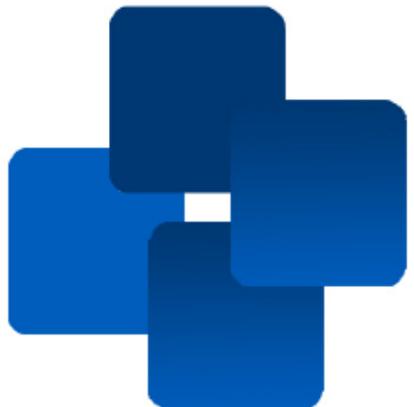


Listeria

Patient and Visitor Information Leaflet.

**Please follow this guidance from the
Infection Prevention and Control Team**



What is Listeria?

Listeria, a bacterium, is rare but can cause potentially life-threatening disease. Although some adults experience only mild infections such as gastroenteritis, it can lead to severe blood poisoning, septicaemia or meningitis. It is particularly dangerous in pregnancy as it can cause a mild flu-like illness which is not serious to the mother but can cause miscarriage, premature delivery, stillbirth or severe illness in a new born child. Up to five per cent of the population may be carriers of the disease and do not become ill.

It has the unusual characteristic of being able to grow, albeit slowly, at temperatures as low as zero degrees Celsius. Proper cooking and pasteurisation kill this germ.

How do you get Listeria?

You usually become infected after eating food contaminated with the Listeria bacteria. Foods associated with transmission are most often ready-to-eat refrigerated and processed foods such as: pre-prepared cooked and chilled meals, soft cheeses, cold cuts of meat, pâtés and smoked fish.

It is impossible to tell from its appearance whether food is contaminated with Listeria. It will look, smell and taste normal. Listeria is also widespread in the environment and can be found in raw food, soil, vegetation, sewage and in the faeces of many animals.

Pregnant mothers sometimes transmit the infection to their baby. This can happen in the womb or when giving birth.

How long does it take for symptoms to develop and how long will it last?

It can take from one to over seventy days for illness to develop. The average incubation time is about 30 days. A patient with septicaemia or meningitis will be hospitalised for several weeks.

What is the treatment for Listeria?

Listeria should be treated promptly with antibiotics. Patients with severe symptoms will need to be treated in hospital.

How can I avoid getting Listeria?

- Keep foods for as short a time as possible and follow storage instructions including 'use by' and 'eat by' dates
- Cook food thoroughly. Ensure that all meat is cooked through to the middle

- Separate cooked and raw foods.
- Ensure refrigerator is the correct temperature
- Wash hands, knives, and cutting boards after handling uncooked food
- Wash salads and vegetables thoroughly before eating if not be cooked
- Always follow microwave manufacturers instructions regarding cooking and standing times when heating food
- Throw away left-over reheated food. Cooked food which is not eaten immediately should be cooled as rapidly as possible and then stored in the refrigerator
- Pregnant women, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems should not help with lambing, milking ewes that have recently given birth, touch the after birth or come into contact with new born lambs

For further information please contact Infection Prevention and Control Nurses. Monday to Friday; 09:00hrs to 17:00hrs:

Lister Hospital on 01438 285383 Ext 5383 or Bleep 5383

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