

What is listeriosis?

- A bowel infection caused by the bacteria *Listeria*.
- Animals such as cattle and sheep may carry the bacteria

How does a person get listeriosis?

- A person can become infected by eating food that has not been cooked thoroughly, or has become contaminated after cooking.
- Direct transmission through broken skin and contaminated soil or infected animal feces may occur.
- Unpasteurized (raw milk or foods made from unpasteurized milk) may contain *Listeria*.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Symptoms develop 3 to 70 days after a person has become infected.
- Symptoms may include fever, muscle aches, diarrhea and nausea.
- Pregnant women are 20 times more likely than other healthy people to become infected. The infection can be transmitted to the unborn baby.
- Symptoms usually last 7 to 10 days.
- The bacteria can be shed in the stool for several months.
- Complications such as meningitis and septicemia can occur.

How is listeriosis treated?

- See your doctor for antibiotic treatment.
- Drink plenty of fluids to replace water lost through diarrhea.

How is listeriosis prevented?

- Cook raw meats thoroughly.
- Wash raw vegetables well.
- Avoid unpasteurized (raw) milk, cheese or other foods made from raw milk.
- Keep uncooked meats separate from vegetables; cooked foods from ready-to-eat foods.
- Thoroughly wash cutting boards, counters and utensils with hot, soapy water if they have been in contact with raw meat.
- If you are pregnant or have a weakened immune system:
 - avoid soft cheeses such as Feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined and Mexican-style cheese. There is no need to avoid hard cheeses, processed cheeses, cream cheese, cottage cheese or yogurt
 - avoid refrigerated smoked fish products unless you have cooked them, for example, in a casserole
 - thoroughly cook ready-to-eat foods, such as hot dogs, until steaming hot
 - although the risk is low one may choose to avoid deli meats or thoroughly reheat cold cuts before eating.
- Always wash hands thoroughly:
 - after using the toilet
 - after diapering a child
 - after handling pets and other animals
 - before preparing and handling food

For more information contact your doctor or Population and Public Health
at **306-655-4612**
