

Food and Pregnancy

Three major food-borne risks to pregnant women: The Food No Nos

1. Listeria
2. Methylmercury
3. Toxoplasmosis

In the past there have been many recalls of food because of Listeria contamination.

Some Examples of Listeria food recalls

[Macaroni&Cheese, Canada](#), [Peregrina Cheese](#), [Bacon](#), [Potatoes](#), [Burritos](#), [Custard](#), [Mushrooms](#), [Cole Slaw](#), [Mexican Cheese](#), [Burrata](#), [Chicken](#), [Peanut](#), [Sprout](#), [Strawberry Smoothie](#), [Soy Bean Sprouts](#), [Smoked Fish](#), [Fish Dip](#), [Buttermilk Waffles](#)

Strangely enough, listeria contamination is so prevalent that the Food and Drug Administration has published a "[Listeria monocytogenes Model Press Release.....](#)"

Here are the [2009 FDA Recalls](#). You can sign up for [FDA Product Recalls](#).

This is what you can do to prevent certain risks:

- Do NOT eat hot dogs and luncheon meats - unless they're heated until steaming hot.
- Don't eat "Mexican cheese".
- Do NOT eat burritos, there have been instances of [burritos with listeria contamination](#).
- Do NOT eat undercooked meat, especially no undercooked lamb.
- Do NOT eat homemade salami or sausages that are not cooked well enough.
- Do NOT eat soft cheeses, such as Feta, Brie, Camembert, "blue-veined cheeses," "queso blanco," "queso fresco," and Panela - unless it's labeled as made with pasteurized milk. Check the label.
- Do NOT drink raw (unpasteurized) milk or eat foods that contain unpasteurized milk.
- Do NOT have fresh fruit or vegetable juices (unless they are pasteurized).
- Do NOT eat sprouts.
- Do NOT eat refrigerated pâtés or meat spreads.
- Do NOT eat smoked seafood - unless it's hot and in a cooked dish, such as a casserole. (Refrigerated smoked seafood, such as salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna, or mackerel, is most often labeled as "nova-style," "lox," "kippered," "smoked," or "jerky." These types of fish are found in the refrigerator section or sold at deli counters of grocery stores and delicatessens.)
- Do NOT eat shark, tilefish, king mackerel, and swordfish. These fish can contain high levels of methylmercury.

It's okay to eat other cooked fish/seafood as long as a variety of other kinds are selected during pregnancy or while a woman is trying to become pregnant. She can eat up to 12 ounces (2 average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. Five of the most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish. Another commonly eaten fish, albacore ("white") tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. So, when choosing your two meals of fish and shellfish, you may eat up to 6 ounces (one average meal) of albacore tuna per week.

Do not eat without first washing your hands after you have gardened or worked with soil. Preferably wear gloves when gardening or handling sand from a sandbox.

Don't get a new cat while pregnant and let someone else clean the cat litter.

FDA Advisory: Moms-to-Be: Don't Order These

Swordfish, tilefish, king mackerel, and shark. These fish can contain high levels of methylmercury, a metal that can be harmful to your unborn baby.

It's okay to eat other cooked fish/seafood as long as a variety of other kinds are selected during pregnancy or while a woman is trying to become pregnant. You can choose shellfish, canned fish, smaller ocean fish, or farm-raised fish. You can safely eat 12 ounces per week of a variety of cooked fish. A typical serving size of fish is from 3 to 6 ounces. Of course, if your serving sizes are smaller, you can eat fish more frequently.

Raw sprouts of any kind (including alfalfa, clover, and radish). Bacteria can get into the sprout seeds through cracks in the shell before the sprouts are grown. Once this occurs, these bacteria are nearly impossible to wash out. Check sandwiches and salads. They may often contain raw sprouts. Request that raw sprouts not be added to your food.

Juice by the glass. Juices that are fresh squeezed and sold by the glass, at some juice bars, for example, may not be pasteurized or otherwise treated to ensure their safety. Warning labels are not required on these products. Pregnant women and young children should avoid all unpasteurized juices.

Bringing In

With meal portions getting bigger, more and more people are packing the doggie bag with leftovers to enjoy later. Take care to handle leftovers, take-out, and delivered foods safely.

Leaving A Restaurant With A Doggie Bag?

Handle the leftovers with care. If you won't be arriving home within two hours of being served, don't take the leftovers home with you. And, remember that the inside of a car can get very warm, and bacteria can grow rapidly in foods if they're left in these conditions. To be safe, it's best to go directly home after eating out and put your leftovers in the refrigerator as soon as you arrive.

A Note About Take-Out Foods

When hot, cooked food is purchased, get the food home quickly and eat it right away. Don't let it sit out at room temperature. Cold foods should be eaten within two hours of preparation. Otherwise, store it in the refrigerator or freeze it for eating at another time.

Special Delivery

For delivered foods, eat the food within two hours after it arrives to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying. If the food is not going to be eaten within two hours, you can keep it hot in the oven with the temperature set at or above 200° F (93° C). Side dishes, like stuffing, must also be kept hot in the oven. Covering food will help keep it moist while you keep it warm. Check with a food thermometer to make sure that the food is held at an internal temperature of 140° F (60° C).

The Danger Zone

The "danger zone" is the range of temperatures at which bacteria can grow - usually between 40° and 140° F (4° and 60° C). For food safety, it's important to keep food below or above the "danger zone." Remember the 2-Hour Rule: Discard any perishables (foods that can spoil or become contaminated by bacteria if unrefrigerated) left out at room temperature for longer than two hours. When temperatures are above 90° F (32° C), discard food after one hour.

According to the most recent U.S. Dietary Guidelines, there are seven important nutrients in food that most Americans aren't getting in sufficient amounts:

- Calcium
- Potassium
- Fiber
- Magnesium
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin E

Follow the 4 Simple Steps of Food Preparation: Clean-Separate-Cook-Chill