

Food Safety and You: FOR MOMS-TO-BE



Why are you and your baby at higher risk for foodborne illnesses?

- During pregnancy, your immune system is altered, which makes it harder for your body to fight off certain harmful foodborne pathogens.
- Your unborn baby's immune system is not fully developed to fight off harmful foodborne pathogens.
- For you and your baby, foodborne illnesses not only may cause headache, vomiting or diarrhea, but also serious, even lethal, health problems.

What is foodborne illness?

Foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, is caused by consuming contaminated food or beverages. Many foodborne pathogens such as bacteria, viruses and parasites (also known as germs) can cause illnesses.

Which foodborne pathogens are of the most concern during pregnancy?

Listeria monocytogenes

- This is a bacterium.
- It causes an illness called listeriosis.
- It has been found in a variety of foods including sprouts, raw milk, unpasteurized dairy products and ready-to-eat foods such as deli meats, hot dogs and soft cheeses.



Figure 1. *Listeria monocytogenes* (CDC).

Toxoplasma gondii

- This is a parasite.
- It causes an illness called toxoplasmosis.
- It has been found in raw and undercooked meat; unwashed fruits and vegetables; contaminated water or soil; dirty cat-litter boxes; and outdoor places where cat feces can be found.

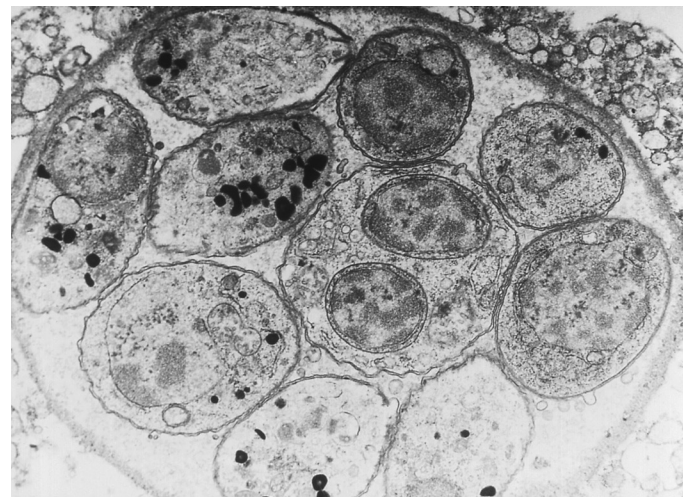


Figure 2. *Toxoplasma gondii* (CDC).

What can you do to reduce the risk of listeriosis?

- Do not consume hot dogs or deli meats unless they are heated to steaming hot.
- Avoid soft cheese or other dairy products made from unpasteurized milk.
- Do not consume refrigerated smoked seafood unless it is in a fully cooked dish.
- Do not drink unpasteurized (raw) milk.

What can you do to reduce the risk of toxoplasmosis?

- Avoid changing a cat litter box.
- Wash hands often with warm, soapy water.
- Cook meat to the minimal required temperature.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

"Is it *done* yet?"

You can't tell by looking. Use a food thermometer to be sure.

USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures

145°F	145°F	160°F	160°F	165°F
with a 3-minute rest time				
				
Beef, Pork, Veal & Lamb Steaks, Roasts & Chops	Fish	Beef, Pork, Veal & Lamb Ground	Egg Dishes	Turkey, Chicken & Duck Whole, Pieces & Ground

www.FoodSafety.gov

USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline
1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854)

Food Safety and Inspection Service

CLEAN SEPARATE COOK CHILL

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How do you know if meats reach the minimal required temperature?

Use a tip-sensitive meat thermometer.

How do you use a food thermometer?

Place the food thermometer in the thickest part of the food. It should not touch bone, fat or gristle. Start checking the temperature toward the end of cooking, but before you expect it to be done. Be sure to clean your food thermometer with hot, soapy water before and after each use.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2016. [Foodborne Germs and Illnesses.](#)
- United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service. 2016. [Is It Done Yet?](#)
- United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service. 2011. [Cooking meat? Check the New Recommended Temperatures.](#)
- United States Food and Drug Administration. 2017. [Food Safety for Moms-to-Be: At-a-Glance.](#)



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