

Pregnant Women: Keep You and Your Baby Safe from Foodborne Illness

Did you know...?

- ▶ During pregnancy, changes in hormones cause a woman's immune system to be lower, so that it is harder to fight off infections.
- ▶ The 6.5 million women who are pregnant each year in the U.S. are at increased risk for some types of foodborne illness.
- ▶ Some foodborne illnesses can cause a woman to have a miscarriage or stillbirth.

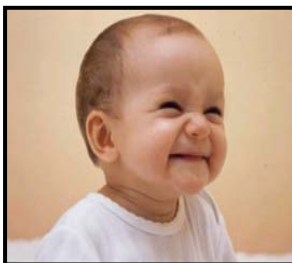


A guide to safe and healthy shopping, cooking and dining during pregnancy.



What does this mean?

- ▶ Pregnant women are MORE likely to get a foodborne illness than other healthy adults.



Some pathogens, such as *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Toxoplasma gondii*, can pass from the mother to her unborn baby and cause serious effects such as miscarriage, stillbirth or health problems for the baby after birth, including eye and/or brain damage.

Symptoms can be mild or severe and may include:

- ▶ Diarrhea
- ▶ Nausea/vomiting
- ▶ Muscle aches
- ▶ Stomach ache
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Fever or chills

(You may feel like you have a mild flu)

Because signs of a foodborne illness can look like symptoms common in pregnancy, you should follow these safe food tips to keep your baby safe.

If you suspect you have a foodborne illness, see your doctor right away!

Safe Shopping



It is important for pregnant women to avoid foods that may contain harmful pathogens. Always check labels for food safety information. Do not buy foods that are past their “sell by” or “use by” date, or are displayed in unsafe or unclean conditions. **Let’s go shopping to get the safest items for you and your baby.**

Dairy – Foods in the dairy section provide calcium, protein and vitamin D.

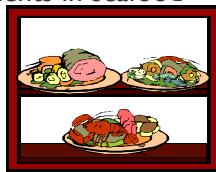
- ✓ **Select only pasteurized (heat-treated) milk, cheese and yogurt.** Unpasteurized (raw) products may contain harmful germs. Check the label to be sure a product is pasteurized. Also, check the “sell by” date on milk and milk products to make sure it is fresh.

- ✓ **Avoid buying soft cheeses made from raw milk** such as Feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined cheeses, queso fresco, queso blanco and Panela. These cheeses may contain *Listeria*. Instead, select hard cheeses, pasteurized processed cheeses and spreads, pasteurized soft cheeses, cream cheese, cottage cheese and mozzarella because they are safe to eat.



Produce / Salads / Juices – Fruits & vegetables provide vitamins, minerals and fiber.

- ✓ **Avoid buying seafood salads found in deli cases or on a salad bar.** Many ingredients in seafood salads support the growth of bacteria. Also, bacteria can be spread to salads by the person preparing them. Long storage times allow *Listeria* to grow.



- ✓ **Avoid buying raw sprouts** including alfalfa, clover, radish and broccoli sprouts. Washing sprouts may NOT make them safe to eat if the seeds they grew from contain harmful bacteria.
- ✓ **Select only pasteurized fruit juices.** Check the labels on refrigerated juices to be sure they have been pasteurized. Frozen, concentrated and canned juices have been heat-treated enough to be safe, but may not be labeled. Fresh squeezed juices are not pasteurized and may be harmful.

Meat – Meats, chicken and fish provide protein, iron and zinc.

- ✓ **Buy a food thermometer and use when cooking meat and poultry (including ground meats).** A food thermometer is a reliable way to tell you when meat has reached a safe temperature. Even if meat looks done, it still may not have reached a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria.



- ✓ **Avoid buying refrigerated smoked or precooked seafood** such as salmon, trout, shrimp, crab meat, tuna, and mackerel. It may be labeled as “kippered” or “lox.” This kind of seafood is not cooked enough to kill harmful bacteria. Instead, choose canned tuna, salmon and crab meat because they are safe to eat.



- ✓ **Put packaged meat, poultry and fish into a plastic bag before placing it in your shopping cart.** Bacteria on the meat can spread to other foods in your shopping cart.
- ✓ **In the deli section, make sure cooked foods are kept separated from uncooked foods.** Uncooked foods may contain bacteria that can be spread to cooked foods. This is called cross-contamination.
- ✓ **Remember to come directly home from the grocery store. Perishable foods should be refrigerated within 2 hours.**

Avoid juices with this label!

WARNING:

This product has not been pasteurized and therefore may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems.

Food Safety First:

How to prepare and cook food safely



Now that you have selected safe foods from the grocery store, preparing and cooking the food safely is just as important! Keep reading for handy tips in the kitchen.

Keep It Clean



- ▶ Always wash hands well with soap and warm running water before handling food, after using the toilet, after changing a baby's diaper, coughing and sneezing, and after touching animals.

Avoid Cross-Contamination



- ▶ Wash knives, cutting boards and food preparation areas with hot, soapy water after touching raw poultry, meat and seafood.
- ▶ Wash hands with soap and warm water after handling raw foods.
- ▶ Thoroughly rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water before eating.

Cook Foods Safely



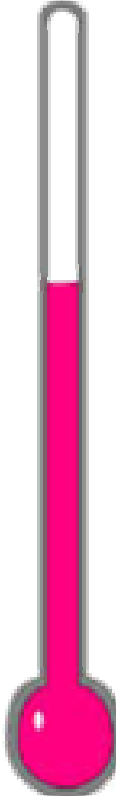
- ▶ Hot dogs should always be heated to steaming hot before eating. Follow the instructions on the package or boil for at least 5 minutes.
- ▶ Heat lunch meats and deli meats to steaming hot before eating. You can use a microwave, oven, or a grill. *This includes packaged lunchmeats and those purchased at the deli. **If you prefer lunch meats cold, they can be heated and then cooled before eating.***
- ▶ Use a food thermometer to make sure meat and poultry (including ground meats) are cooked to safe endpoint temperatures.

Keep Foods at Safe Temperatures



- ▶ Store all perishable foods at or below 40°F. Use a refrigerator thermometer to make sure your refrigerator is between 35 to 40°F.
- ▶ Store eggs and other perishable foods in the refrigerator.
- ▶ Use perishable foods that are precooked or ready-to-eat as soon as possible. If you cannot eat the food within 4 days, it is best to freeze or discard it.

Use a Food Thermometer to Make Sure Foods Reach Safe Endpoint Cooking Temperatures



180°F	Chicken and turkey — whole bird, legs, thighs & wings
170°F	Chicken & turkey breasts
165°F	Ground turkey & chicken, Leftovers, stuffings, casseroles, Hot dogs & lunch meats
160°F	Ground beef & pork Pork & ham Game meat Egg dishes
145°F	Beef, lamb, veal steaks & roasts Fish (flakes with a fork) Eggs (firm yolk and white)

TIP:

Insert thermometer in the middle of the thickest part of the food you're cooking, allow a few seconds for the temperature to register. When testing the temperature of a hamburger, lift it out of the pan on a spatula and insert the thermometer from the side.



Tips for Dining Out

When you are dining away from home and are not sure if a food is safe to eat, here are some things to look for...



Always (while pregnant) AVOID:

- ▶ Raw or undercooked meat and poultry
- ▶ Raw or undercooked seafood
This includes sushi, sushami, ceviche, oysters, clams, mussels and shrimp. Fully cooked fish should flake easily with a fork.
- ▶ Soft cheeses made from raw milk
Examples are Feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined cheeses, queso fresco, queso blanco and Panela.
- ▶ Refrigerated smoked or precooked seafood
This includes salmon, trout, shrimp, crab meat, tuna and mackerel. May be called “kippered” or “lox.”
- ▶ Foods containing raw eggs
Examples are **homemade** ice cream and mayonnaise, Hollandaise sauce, and Caesar salad dressings. If these products are bought in stores, they are safe.
- ▶ Raw sprouts
- ▶ Seafood salads from a deli or salad bar
- ▶ Hot dogs, luncheon meats and deli meats served cold
- ▶ Unpasteurized fruit juices
This includes Juice bars.

Things you can do:

- ▶ If meat or poultry is not cooked to “well done,” send it back to be fully cooked.
- ▶ Ask for deli meats to be heated to steaming hot.
- ▶ Ask your server or the restaurant manager if the Caesar dressing, homemade mayonnaise or Hollandaise sauce is made with raw eggs.
- ▶ Ask you server to “hold the raw sprouts.”
- ▶ If you are not sure if a specialty cheese has been pasteurized, ask the manager to please check the label for you.
- ▶ If you are not sure if juices have been pasteurized, don’t be afraid to ask!

Picnic Pointers

- ▶ Wash your hands before preparing food and before eating.
- ▶ Take only foods that can be kept at safe temperatures on picnics.
- ▶ Keep cold food below 40°F by storing in a cooler with a cold source.
- ▶ Keep hot food above 140°F.
- ▶ Avoid preparing food too far in advance, unless you plan to properly cool and reheat it.
- ▶ Avoid letting food sit out longer than 1 hour.
- ▶ Put leftovers in the cooler immediately.
- ▶ If food sits out longer than one hour, **throw it out!**



For more information:

USDA/ FDA Foodborne Illness Education
Information Center
www.nal.usda.gov/foodborne/index.html

Government Food Safety Information
www.foodsafety.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/foodsafety

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension
www.colostate.edu/orgs/safefood