

Food Safety

By vcwh

FOOD SAFETY IN PREGNANCY

GENERAL GUIDELINES

When in doubt, throw it out.

Wash your hands before food is handled and after touching raw meat, fish or eggs.

Stick to pasteurized dairy products, and make sure that you use food that has been refrigerated continuously.

Never eat raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish or shellfish while you're pregnant.

Don't eat eggs that are runny (choose well cooked scrambled or hard boiled eggs)

Wash raw fruits and vegetables thoroughly.

Avoid old alfalfa and other sprouts, which are often contaminated with bacteria.

MERCURY IN FISH:

Mercury is toxic to the developing nervous systems of fetuses, babies and young children. It gets into water from industrial pollution and then into fish. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) warns pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children against eating fish that may be high in mercury.

Other cooked seafood and commercially caught or farm raised fish are safe for expecting and nursing mothers up to 12 oz. per week. Example - canned tuna fish.

The FDA warns against eating shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tile fish. Limit canned albacore tuna to an average of 6 oz. per week.

LISTERIA:

A bacteria that occurs in certain foods and can cause listeriosis, a disease characterized by flu-like symptoms. Pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems are particularly susceptible. During pregnancy you should avoid:

Soft mold ripened cheeses (including Brie, Camembert, Danish blue, blue Stilton)

Soft ice cream from machines; Unpasteurized milk

Undercooked meat, fish, shellfish, and eggs

Pre-cooked or pre-roasted poultry

Heat-and-serve food

Deli meats

Unwashed raw vegetables and fruit

Listeria is less likely to be present in foods that are prepared, sold, and stored in hygienic conditions. Food that has been left out in warm temperatures and in contact with the air carries the most risk. Heat treated foods, such as

canned meats, pasteurized or sterilized milk, and other dairy products, are safe because this processing kills the bacteria. Pasteurized milk and cheese or hard ice cream sold in blocks are fine.

ESCHERICHIA COLI:

A bacteria that can be responsible for some food infections. This microbe is found in the digestive tract and feces of all humans and can occasionally cause disease; it can also be air or waterborne.

Infants and young children are most susceptible to infection.

E Coli has been isolated from ground beef, cheese, shellfish and watercress.

Any food exposed to sewage-contaminated

Water can carry E. Coli.

You should particularly avoid:

Eating meat (especially ground beef) that is rare or undercooked

Drinking unpasteurized milk or juices

Sprouts and salami