

Listeria

<b>Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unpasteurized (raw) milk and dairy products.</li><li>• Any type of cheese made with unpasteurized (raw) milk.</li><li>• Unheated queso fresco-type cheeses, when made with pasteurized or unpasteurized (raw) milk or similar fresh, soft cheeses such as queso blanco and requesón.</li><li>• Raw fruits and vegetables (such as sprouts).</li><li>• Ready-to-eat deli meats and hot dogs.</li><li>• Refrigerated pâtés or meat spreads.</li><li>• Refrigerated smoked seafood.</li></ul>
<b>Incubation period</b>	Usually 1 to 4 weeks, can be as long as 70 days
<b>Symptoms</b>	<p><i>Listeria</i> can cause fever and diarrhea similar to other foodborne germs, but this type of <i>Listeria</i> infection is rarely diagnosed.</p> <p>Symptoms in people with invasive listeriosis, meaning the bacteria has spread beyond the gut, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For pregnant women: fever, fatigue and muscle aches. Pregnant women may also have no symptoms but experience fetal death, pre-term labor, or infection of the newborn.</li><li>• For all others, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions in addition to fever and muscle aches.</li></ul>
<b>Duration of illness</b>	Days to weeks
<b>Who is at risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adults age 65 and older</li><li>• Pregnant women and their newborns</li><li>• People whose immune systems are weakened due to illness or medical treatment</li></ul>
<b>What to do</b>	For invasive listeriosis, antibiotics given promptly can cure the infection. In pregnant women, antibiotics are given to prevent infection in the unborn baby.

## Prevention

### Recommendations for everyone:

- Do not drink raw (unpasteurized) milk, and do not eat soft cheeses made with raw milk, such as queso fresco.
- Eat cut melon right away or refrigerate it.

In addition to recommendations for everyone, people at higher risk should avoid the following foods:

- Refrigerated pâtés or meat spreads from a deli or meat counter or from the refrigerated section of a store
- Hot dogs, cold cuts, and deli meats, unless they are heated to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C) or until steaming hot before eating.
- Refrigerated smoked seafood, unless it is canned or shelf-stable or it is in a cooked dish, such as a casserole
- Raw or lightly cooked sprouts of any kind
- Any type of cheese made with unpasteurized (raw) milk
- Unheated queso fresco-type cheeses, when made with pasteurized or unpasteurized (raw) milk or similar fresh, soft cheeses such as queso blanco and, requesón

Queso fresco-type cheeses have caused Listeria outbreaks. Safer cheese choices, especially for pregnant women, include:

- Hard cheeses, when made with pasteurized milk, such as Asiago, Cheddar, Parmesan, or Swiss/Gruyere/Emmental
- Cottage cheese, cream cheese, string cheese, feta, and mozzarella, when made with pasteurized milk
- Heated queso fresco-type cheeses or heated unpasteurized (raw) milk cheeses, when heated to 165°F or until steaming hot