



OF SAFETY

Facts from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Perishable Items Pose Serious Health Risk

(NAPSA)—Learning more about food safety may help protect you from the damage being done by a bacterium known as *Listeria monocytogenes*.

This bacterium can cause a serious infection in humans called listeriosis, which sickens 2,500 people every year and results in 500 deaths. In pregnant women, foodborne illnesses from this bacterium can result in miscarriage. Also at risk are older adults and those with weakened immune systems.

To reduce illness, the Food and Drug Administration advises that all consumers:

- use perishable items that are precooked or ready-to-eat as soon as possible;
- clean their refrigerators regularly; and
- use a refrigerator thermometer to make sure that the refrigerator always stays at 40 degrees F or below.

Since pregnant women, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for listeriosis, FDA provides the following advice to those high-risk consumers:

- Do not eat hot dogs and luncheon meats, unless they are reheated until steaming hot.
- Do not eat soft cheese such as Feta, Brie and Camembert cheeses, blue-veined cheeses, and Mexican-style cheese such as “queso blanco fresco.”

Cheese that may be eaten include hard cheeses; semi-soft cheeses such as mozzarella; pasteurized processed cheeses such as slices and spreads; cream cheese; and cottage cheese.

- Do not eat refrigerated meat



Using a thermometer to determine the temperature of your refrigerator may help prevent foodborne illnesses.

spreads. Canned or shelf-stable meat spreads may be eaten.

- Do not eat refrigerated smoked seafood, unless it is in a cooked dish such as a casserole. Refrigerated smoked seafood, such as salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna or mackerel, is most often labeled “nova-style,” “lox,” “kippered,” “smoked,” or “jerky.” Canned or shelf-stable smoked seafood may be eaten.

- Do not drink raw (unpasteurized milk) or eat foods that contain it.

To keep food safe from harmful bacteria, follow these four simple steps.

1. Wash hands and surfaces often.
2. Don't cross contaminate.
3. Cook to proper temperatures.
4. Refrigerate promptly.

For more information on food safety, call the FDA at 1-800-FDA-4010 or visit the Web site at www.cfsan.fda.gov.