



An Overview on Human Listeriosis and its Prevention

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DESCRIPTION

Listeriosis is a bacterial infection most commonly caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*, although *L. ivanovii* and *L. grayi* have been reported in specific cases. Listeriosis can cause serious illnesses such as severe sepsis, meningitis, or encephalitis, sometimes leading to lifelong damage and even death. Stillbirth or spontaneous abortion can occur in pregnant women, and premature birth is common. Listeriosis can cause mild, self-limiting gastroenteritis and fever in anyone.

Listeria monocytogenes is ubiquitous and is primarily transmitted through the oral route after ingestion of contaminated food, after which the bacteria enter the intestinal tract and cause systemic infection. Diagnosis of listeriosis requires isolation of the causative organism from blood and/or cerebrospinal fluid. Treatment includes long-term administration of antibiotics, primarily ampicillin and gentamicin, but these organisms are usually susceptible.

Listeriosis is a serious infection can infect anyone, but pregnant women, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems are particularly at risk. Although they may experience only clinical symptoms such as these, they may suffer from more serious complications such as premature birth and neonatal infections. In some cases, stillbirth may occur because *Listeria monocytogenes* can cross three protective barriers (gastrointestinal, blood-brain, and placenta), symptoms of listeriosis range from mild pain to death.

- *Listeria* can be found in soil, water, and animal faeces. We can become infected by eating.
- Raw vegetables contaminated by soil or contaminated manure used as fertilizer.
- Contaminated meat.
- Unpasteurized milk or food made from unpasteurized milk.
- Certain processed foods—soft cheeses, hot dogs, cured meats, etc. that are contaminated after processing.

Listeriosis is rare, but there are ways to further reduce the chance of infection. These precautions are especially important during pregnancy.

Treatment: Wash your hands with warm, soapy water before preparing food. Clean your utensils and worktops in the same way.

Cook thoroughly: Make sure meat and egg dishes are heated well and consistently. A food thermometer can help.

Cheese: Soft cheeses, including brie, feta, camembert, blue cheese, or Mexican-style cheeses such as queso fresco, panela, and queso blanco, unless the label clearly states that the product is made with pasteurized cow's milk. Please avoid it.

Meat: Avoid cold cuts, especially cured meats and hot dogs, unless they were cooked at a high temperature before eating them. Wash anything that comes into contact with raw or cold meats.

Smoked seafood: Avoid chilled smoked seafood unless it is thoroughly heated before eating.

Listeriosis in pregnant women can lead to miscarriage, premature birth, or stillbirth. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), listeriosis during pregnancy is responsible for approximately 20% of fetal deaths.

If the baby survives, serious infections can develop in the brain, blood, or lungs. This can lead to lifelong health problems such as seizures, paralysis, and mental retardation.

Bacteremia should be treated for 2 weeks, meningitis for 3 weeks, and brain abscess for at least 6 weeks. Ampicillin is generally considered the antibiotic of choice. Gentamicin is often added for its synergistic effects. Overall mortality is 20%-30%. Of all pregnancy-related cases, 22% resulted in miscarriage or neonatal death, although mothers usually survive.

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