

QUICK FACTS: EATING SAFELY FOR TWO

During pregnancy, hormonal changes in the body lower your immune system's ability to fight off illness and infection. Increased susceptibility to foodborne illness is a risk shared by both mother and child, and although there is no "zero-risk" approach you can take to avoid foodborne illness, your medical risks can be greatly lessened by being aware of food dangers when preparing and consuming food during pregnancy. You're paying attention to what you eat, but it's also important to know what **NOT** to eat.

The foods of most concern are also important parts of your diet—certain fish, meat, milk, cheese, and raw foods including veggies, fruit, and juices. The following guidelines are helpful for learning to choose the right foods, as well as mitigating food-related risks during your pregnancy.

What foods might be harmful to me and my baby...

Should I avoid meat?

Avoid **rare** or **undercooked** beef, veal, lamb or pork (including ground meat) as it may contain E. coli. Undercooked poultry and stuffing (including ground poultry) should be avoided because of the risk of contamination with campylobacter and salmonella. Unpasteurized refrigerated **meat spread or pâté** should be avoided because it may contain the pathogen listeria.

Safe Cooking Temperatures for Meat and Fish: Fish and Shellfish to 145° F, Ground meats (not poultry) to 160° F, Poultry (including ground poultry) 165° F, Whole Cuts of Meat (including pork) 145° F AND let meat rest 3 minutes before carving or serving. Judging doneness by color is not reliable, use a thermometer and be certain. See **Quick Facts: Meat Thermometers**

What about sushi and other fish?

While well prepared sushi is safe for most of the adult population, **decreased** immunity during pregnancy **make raw fish and raw shellfish unsafe to eat**. Raw shellfish such as **oysters, clams, and mussels** pose a concern for everybody, and **should be avoided altogether during pregnancy**.

Refrigerated, smoked seafood should be avoided. This type of fish is often found in the deli section of your grocery store. Canned smoked seafood is safe, as is smoked seafood in a cooked dish like a casserole.

Certain kinds of fish, such as **shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish (golden or white snapper)** and **albacore tuna** contain high levels of mercury and **should be avoided**. Mercury consumed during pregnancy has been linked to developmental delays and brain damage. Shrimp, crab, tilapia, cod, canned light tuna, salmon, catfish and trout generally have a lower amount of mercury, but should still only be eaten in moderation (12 ounces a week).

Are pre-made salads okay?

Avoid commercially made salads such as ham, tuna, pasta or potato. **Avoid seafood salad**. There are too many unknown variables such as how the various ingredients were handled, the temperature of the refrigerated case, or how long it's been there. Skip the deli and make your salads at home, that way you'll know exactly what you're eating.

What do I need to know about raw foods like produce and juices:

Choose fresh produce that looks undamaged, and **wash thoroughly in drinkable water including citrus, melons, and other produce that will have a rind or peel removed**. It doesn't matter if your fruits and vegetables are from the garden, the farmer's market or the grocery store – **Do not eat unwashed produce**.

Avoid sprouts altogether.

Most juices and ciders are pasteurized, but some may not be. Unpasteurized juices (and ciders) can contain harmful bacteria, but should be easier to steer clear of because they are required to carry a warning label. When buying smoothies, **ask the preparer if they use pasteurized juice**.

If they aren't sure or say no, it's best to skip it.



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What about milk, cheese and eggs?

Make sure that any milk, or milk product, is pasteurized.

Most cheeses are pasteurized, but read the labels. **Avoid** these types of soft cheeses unless they clearly state that they are made from pasteurized milk: **Brie, Camembert, Roquefort, Feta, Gorgonzola, Roquefort, blue-veined cheeses, and Mexican style cheeses** that include queso blanco and queso fresco.

Raw eggs or foods containing raw eggs should be avoided because of the potential exposure to salmonella, which can grow both inside and outside the egg. The safest practice is to wash hands thoroughly after cracking eggs and cook eggs thoroughly until the yolk is hard.

If you like eggs runny or eat uncooked eggs in foods like cookie dough, cake batter, eggnog, homemade mayonnaise, Hollandaise, homemade ice cream, or Caesar dressing, buy pasteurized shell eggs or liquid pasteurized egg products. **Don't lick the spoon!**

Handle with extra care when cooking and eating

Are lunchmeats safe?

Hotdogs and Cold cuts (ham, bologna, turkey, and more) can be dangerous for you and your baby. Listeria is the only bacterium that can survive at refrigerator temperatures of 40° or less. Although the general population can resist Listeria, pregnant women can suffer miscarriages as a result of eating Listeria-contaminated ready-to-eat foods.

To reduce the risk of Listeria, **heat cold cuts and hot dogs until steaming. Order hot sandwiches in restaurants, such as grilled ham & cheese, or panini.**

Is it okay to eat out?

Be particularly cautious about the food safety track records of dining establishments you frequent. Most **State's public health websites** have links to information regarding restaurant inspection scores. Avoid places that appear unsanitary.

In restaurants, order meat and burgers well done, and hot sandwiches, such as grilled ham & cheese or panini. Skip the pre-made salads, and don't eat anything made with raw eggs.

What else should I be mindful of?

Follow these 4 steps for regular safe food-handling: Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill. Wash hands and surfaces often, don't cross contaminate, cook to the right (safe) temperature, and refrigerate promptly.

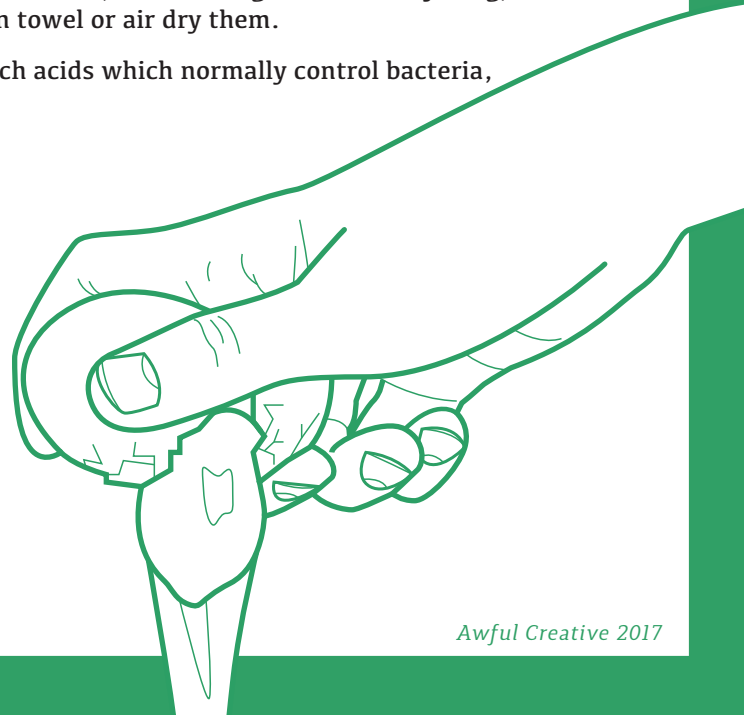
See www.stopfoodborneillness.org/awareness/

Wash hands often. Before and after handling food, using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets. Use clean, running water (warm or cold), apply soap and scrub for at least 20 seconds (Twice through the Birthday song). Rinse hands well under clean, running water. Dry your hands with a clean towel or air dry them.

Limit the use of antacids. Ingestion of antacids reduces the stomach acids which normally control bacteria, increasing the risk of foodborne illness.

Be Attentive to Symptoms

Symptoms of foodborne illness such as stomach pains, nausea, fever, and diarrhea can appear right away or up to several weeks after eating contaminated food. Because the consequences can be dire, if you have even fleeting symptoms, contact your medical professional immediately and ask whether testing would be advised.



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