

Reducing the risk of listeriosis to vulnerable groups

Listeriosis is caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*



Chilled ready-to-eat (RTE) foods are more likely to be contaminated



Sandwiches



Salads



Smoked salmon



Deli meats and pâtés



Soft or semi soft cheese



Coleslaw

Vulnerable groups are at higher risk of hospitalisation and fatality

Older adults (>65 years old)	Pregnant women
Unborn and newly delivered infants	People with diabetes
Patients undergoing immunosuppressive or cytotoxic treatment	Cancer patients

Vomiting and nausea	Persistent fever
Symptoms appear between 3 and 70 days after infection	
Muscle aches, neck stiffness and severe headache	Pregnant women at risk of premature labour, meningitis in the newborn and miscarriage

Practical steps to reduce the risk of listeriosis

Ensure all chilled RTE food is properly stored at $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$

Minimise the time that food spends out of the cold chain

Serve chilled RTE food within its use-by date

Use a “first in, first out” system for chilled RTE foods

Consume chilled RTE food as soon as possible after serving

Remove uneaten chilled RTE foods promptly from patients

Agree a more stringent microbiological specification of “*L. monocytogenes* not detected in 25 g” with your suppliers of chilled RTE food