



KEEP YOUR BABY SAFE DURING PREGNANCY

As a pregnant woman, eating for two, you should be aware that certain soft cheeses can become contaminated with bacteria called Listeria. If you become sick from Listeria, the baby you are carrying could get sick or die. To protect your unborn baby, eat hard cheeses instead of soft cheeses while you are pregnant. Soft cheeses that can easily become contaminated include:

Mexican-Style Soft Cheeses

- Queso blanco
- Queso fresco
- Queso de hoja
- Queso de crema
- Asadero

Other Soft Cheeses

- Feta (goat cheese)
- Brie
- Camembert
- Blue-veined cheeses, like Roquefort

Listeria can also contaminate other foods. Contaminated food may not look, smell, or taste differently than uncontaminated food. Symptoms of infection can develop from 2 to 30 days after you eat contaminated food. If the infection spreads to your unborn baby, you could start early labor. Tell your doctor right away if you get any of these symptoms:

- Fever and chills, or other flu-like symptoms
- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Although Listeria bacteria are killed with thorough cooking, these "tough bugs" can grow in the refrigerator and survive in the freezer. To prevent infection, take these precautions:

- Use hard cheeses, like cheddar, instead of soft cheeses during pregnancy.
- If you do use soft cheeses during pregnancy, cook them until they are boiling (bubbling).
- Use only pasteurized dairy products. It will state "pasteurized" on the label.

- If you do use hard cheeses made from un-pasteurized milk, use only those marked "aged 60 days" (or longer).
- Eat only thoroughly cooked meat, poultry, or seafood.
- Thoroughly reheat all meats purchased at deli counters, including cured meats like salami, before eating them.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables with water.
- Follow label instructions on products that must be refrigerated or that have a "use by" date.
- Keep the inside of the refrigerator, counter tops, and utensils clean.
- After handling raw foods, wash your hands with warm soapy water, and wash the utensil you used with hot soapy water before using them again.

Do you have any questions about Listeria? Call (1-800) FDA-4010. Department of Health and Human Services Food and Drug Administration (HFI-40) 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857 DHHS Publication No. (FDA) 96-2304S

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