

# Who has a higher risk of getting *Listeria* food poisoning?

**Lessons from *Listeria* outbreaks:** Food poisoning can happen to anyone. Each year, about 48 million people in the US (1 in 6) get sick from eating contaminated food. It can be especially dangerous for pregnant women and their newborns; older adults; and people with immune systems weakened by cancer, cancer treatments, or other serious conditions (like diabetes, kidney failure, liver disease, and HIV/AIDS). *Listeria* is a prime example of how germs that contaminate food can cause sickness and death in these groups.

## Pregnant women, fetuses, and newborn infants



*Listeria* can pass from pregnant women to their fetuses and newborns. It can cause miscarriages, stillbirths, and newborn deaths.



### Chancy cheese

**LISTERIA OUTBREAK:** Queso fresco (a type of soft cheese) sickened 142 people, killed 10 newborns and 18 adults, and caused 20 miscarriages.

## People with weakened immune systems



*Listeria* can spread through the bloodstream to cause meningitis, and often kills. The weaker your immune system, the greater the risk.



### Contaminated celery

**LISTERIA OUTBREAK:** Pre-cut celery in chicken salad served at hospitals sickened 10 people who had other serious health problems. Five of them died as a result.

## Adults 65 or older



*Listeria* can spread through the bloodstream to cause meningitis, and often kills. The older you are, the greater the risk.



### Tainted cantaloupes

**LISTERIA OUTBREAK:** Contaminated whole cantaloupes sickened 147 people in 28 states and caused one of the deadliest foodborne outbreaks in the US. There were 33 deaths, mostly in adults over 65, reported during the outbreak.

SOURCE: CDC, 2013

## What foods are risky?

When it comes to *Listeria*, some foods are more risky than others. Meet some of the other foods where *Listeria* is known to hide.



Raw Sprouts



Raw Milk  
(unpasteurized)



Soft Cheeses



Deli Meats and Hot Dogs  
(cold, not heated)



Smoked Seafood