



Pregnancy & Food Safety

Food safety is always important, but you have to be especially careful during pregnancy. Freshly prepared foods are best and you should always ensure that fruit and vegetables are washed properly. Any leftovers should not be stored for more than one day.

Remember to follow general food safety rules, such as:

- Keep cold food below 5 °C and hot food above 60 °C before serving to stop food poisoning bacteria growth.
- Separate raw and cooked foods and do not use the same utensils for both.
- Defrost frozen foods in the fridge or microwave. Never on the bench or the sink.
- If you store raw meats/poultry in the fridge, make sure the juices do not drip onto other foods.
- Cook food thoroughly and make sure poultry, seafood and minced meats are cooked right to the centre.
- Always wash and dry hands thoroughly before and after food preparation.

For more information, see our [food safety posters and information sheets](http://www.health.act.gov.au/foodsafety) by following the links at: <http://www.health.act.gov.au/foodsafety>.

Listeriosis

During pregnancy there are certain foods you need to be extra careful about consuming as they may harbour harmful bacteria, such as *Listeria*. Infection with *Listeria* can cause miscarriage, stillbirth or infection of the newborn. Unlike other food pathogens, *Listeria* can multiply in contaminated foods even while they are refrigerated. *Listeria* can also survive in freezers. For these reasons, the following foods should be avoided during pregnancy:

- soft and semi-soft cheese (e.g. ricotta, brie)
- cold cooked chicken
- manufactured and cold meats
- soft serve ice-cream (including in milkshakes)
- cold, smoked and raw seafood
- prepared salads (e.g. from food courts, supermarkets)
- unpasteurised dairy products
- pâté
- ready-to-eat foods, such as prepared sandwiches, sushi and bain-marie foods.

For more information, see our [Listeriosis information sheet](http://www.health.act.gov.au/foodsafety) by following the links at: <http://www.health.act.gov.au/foodsafety>.

Safe Consumption of Fish

Fish provide many nutrients that are essential during pregnancy such as protein, minerals and Omega-3 fatty acids. However, certain fish species contain levels of mercury that can be harmful to your developing baby's nervous system. Pregnant women may safely consume fish by having:

- 2-3 serves per week (1 serve = 150g) of any fish or seafood not listed below; or
- 1 serve per fortnight of Shark (Flake) or Billfish (Broadbill, Swordfish and Marlin) and no other fish that fortnight; or
- 1 serve per week of Orange Roughy (Deep Sea Perch) or Catfish and no other fish that week.

For more information on food and nutrition during pregnancy see ACT Health's Good Nutrition in Pregnancy Guide at: <http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=da&did=10178249>.

Acknowledgements:

Food Standards Australia New Zealand, 2005, *Listeria and Food: Commonly Asked Questions* (webpage), www.foodstandards.gov.au.

Heymann DJ, 2008, *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual*, 19th edition.

NSW Food Authority, 2008 *Pregnancy and Safety* (webpage), <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumers/life-events-and-food/pregnancy/>.

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TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETER SERVICE 131 450
 Canberra and District - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
HEALTH CARE INTERPRETERS 6205 3333

Health Protection Service

Population Health Division
 Howard Florey Centenary House, 25 Mulley Street,
 Holder ACT 2611
 Locked Bag 5005 Weston Creek ACT 2611
 Phone: (02) 6205 1700 Fax: (02) 6205 1705
 Email: hps@act.gov.au
 Web site: www.health.act.gov.au