Food Safety During Pregnancy

TAHOE FOREST HEALTH SYSTEM

During pregnancy, your body alters your immune function so that your baby can grow properly. Because of this shift in the immune system, extra precautions are needed to prevent illness, as you are more vulnerable to infection. Contaminated food can carry harmful bacteria or viruses that may cause illness.

Listeria

Listeria is one of the main food borne illness concerns during pregnancy. Pregnant women are ten times more likely to contract listeria than the general population. Infection is rare, but can cause fetal death. There is treatment for listeria infection. Talk to your care provider if you notice any flu-like symptoms. Follow food safety practices to greatly reduce your risk.

Follow best practices for food safety to keep you and your baby safe.

Time & Temperature

- Wash hands frequently, especially before and after cooking
- Clean up before cooking, wipe down counters and cutting boards
- Do not let food sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours
- Store raw meats, fish, poultry and eggs below ready to eat food in the refrigerator
- Throw away leftovers after 3-5 days
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meats, fish, and fruits or vegetables to prevent cross-contamination
- Purchase food from trustworthy shops that follow food safety guidelines
- Cook at home more often to ensure safe practices
- Cold and hot temperatures can prevent bacteria from growing in your food. Keep food under 40°F or over 135°F
- Use a meat thermometer to test food temperatures and cook to these safe internal temperatures:

Poultry 165° F	**Leftovers** 165° F
Ground Beef 160° F	**Seafood** 145° F
Tenderloin/ Steak 145° F	**Pork** 145° F

High Risk Foods

Dairy

- **Avoid** unpasteurized dairy products like raw milk and cheese.
- Cheese made from pasteurized milk is okay. Most U.S. processed cheese is pasteurized. Look for “pasteurized” on the label of soft cheese.
- Hard cheeses, like cheddar and parmesan, are less likely to be contaminated.

Remember no food is 100% safe or 100% unsafe. Foods on the high risk list are more likely to cause foodborne illness. Pasteurization (a heat process) not guarantee that food is free of contamination, however it greatly reduces the likelihood. Look for the term “pasteurized” on the food label.

Meat & Eggs

- **Avoid** raw or undercooked meats. Wash hands after handling raw meat.
- Do not store raw meat in refrigerator longer than 3 days.
- Heat deli meat, hot dogs, precooked sausage, or pate to steaming before consuming.
- Thaw meat overnight in the refrigerator, not at room temperature.
- **Avoid** raw or undercooked yolks. Cook eggs until white and yolk are firm.
- **Avoid** foods that contain raw or under cooked eggs like cookie dough, eggnog, Caesar dressing, hollandaise, meringue, and mousse. Note: Store-bought packaged versions of these products that are pasteurized are okay.

Seafood

- **Avoid** all raw or undercooked shellfish like oysters and clams. Shellfish account for 75% of foodborne illness associated with seafood. COOKED SHELFISH IS OKAY.
- Be cautious of raw fish. To greatly reduce risk, consume cooked fish and use proper food safety precautions.
- Fish high in mercury include swordfish, bigeye or ahi tuna, mackerel, and shark. Canned light tuna 2-3 x per week is okay.

Vegetables & Fruit

- Rinse all fruit and vegetables with water, even if the skin will not be eaten and even if the package says prewashed like salad greens. A “produce wash” is not necessary.
- **Avoid** unpasteurized juice. If making juice at home, wash all produce first.
- **Avoid** pre-cut produce unless you are going to cook it.
- **Avoid** sprouts or microgreens that are difficult to clean.

Many high-risk foods contain nutrients your body and baby need during pregnancy. Instead of avoiding them, incorporate safe ways to include them in your diet. For example, consume cooked instead of raw seafood.

GOVERNEMENT AGENCIES, LIKE THE FDA AND USDA, MONITOR FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES AND POST RECALLS FOR CONTAMINATED FOOD ITEMS. FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.FOODSAFETY.GOV/RECALLS-AND-OUTBREAKS

For more information, please call Tahoe Forest Wellness at (530) 587-3769 or visit TFHD.com/baby-me