

Patient Information

Safer eating- A guide for patients with a weakened immune system

Therapies – Dietetics Department

Name:

Date:

Dietitian:

Introduction

If your immune system becomes weakened you are at risk of developing certain types of infections. Many of the foods we eat contain small amounts of bacteria or fungi, for most people this is not a problem.

If you are immunocompromised these can prove harmful and may lead to infections. There is no reason however, why you cannot continue to enjoy food and maintain a healthy diet whilst you are receiving treatment.

Symptoms of food poisoning can vary, but may include mild flu like symptoms such as headache, high temperature and a sore throat or vomiting and diarrhoea. During periods of diarrhoea and vomiting you may not be able to drink to your fluid target to maintain hydration or essential medication may not be absorbed. This may result in dehydration and potentially risk organ rejection.

These guidelines aim to help you to lower the risk of a food borne infection by offering a list of higher risk foods which are best avoided. Other foods which are not listed are generally safe as long as good food hygiene is observed.

General guidelines

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) recommend following the 4Cs of good hygiene:

- 1) Wash your hands properly and keep them clean.
- 2) Cook food properly.
- 3) Chill food properly.
- 4) Avoid cross-contamination.

Cleaning

- Wash hands thoroughly in hot soapy water before and after handling food especially raw food.
- Wash and change dish cloths and tea towels regularly and launder at 60°. Use a separate hand towel or kitchen paper to dry your hands.
- Keep the kitchen clean. Make sure work surfaces, chopping boards and utensils are cleaned thoroughly with hot soapy water.

Cooking

- Thorough cooking kills harmful bacteria in food so it is important to make sure food is cooked properly.
- Meat and poultry should be thoroughly cooked until piping hot throughout, the meat is no longer pink and the juices run clear.
- Eat cooked foods within an hour of cooking or heating.
- Keep left overs in the fridge stored in sealed containers and eat within two days.
- Always follow the cooking or re heating instructions on the food label.
- Barbeques increase the risk of foodborne illness when undercooked meat or poultry is eaten. The Food Standards Agency recommends to pre-cook meat or poultry in the oven first and then finish off on the barbeque for flavour.

Chilling

- Chilling food properly helps to stop harmful bacteria growing.
- Keep fridges and freezers at the correct temperature.
- Fridge between 0-5°C, freezer -18°C.
- Cold food should be eaten within four hours of preparing unless kept in the fridge.
- When shopping, buy frozen/ chilled food last and store in the fridge or freezer as soon as possible.
- Do not leave canned foods open. Store in airtight containers and keep in the fridge.
- Defrost frozen food in the fridge or the microwave.
- Keep chilled food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible during preparation.

Avoiding cross contamination

- Cross-contamination happens when bacteria spreads between food, surfaces or equipment.
- Clean and disinfect work surfaces, chopping boards and equipment thoroughly. Clean before, in between and after preparing foods especially raw foods.
- Keep raw meat and fish at the bottom of the fridge.
- Separate raw foods such as poultry, meat and fish and place in separate bags away from other foods.
- Do not wash raw poultry under the tap as this can spread harmful bacteria around the sink and work surfaces; leave it unwashed and cook the meat thoroughly- this will destroy any harmful bacteria.

Food Safety advice

	High risk foods- should avoid	Safer alternatives
Meat and poultry	<p>Deli meats</p> <p>Bought rotisserie chickens</p> <p>Meat and vegetable paté</p> <p>Raw meat/ poultry</p> <p>Cured meat- salami, parma ham, chorizo and pepperoni</p>	<p>Pre-packaged cooked meat</p> <p>Home cooked chicken</p> <p>Tinned paté</p> <p>Thoroughly cooked meat / poultry</p> <p>Thoroughly cooked cured meat</p>
Fish and shellfish	<p>Raw or undercooked fish and shellfish, sashimi, oysters and caviar</p> <p>Cold ready to eat smoked fish, shell fish</p>	<p>Thoroughly cooked fish and shellfish</p> <p>Tinned fish, e.g. tuna, salmon, sardines</p> <p>Tinned fish pâté</p> <p>Vacuum-packed smoked fish</p> <p>Frozen fish (but not frozen shellfish)</p> <p>Well-cooked prawns (e.g. in a curry)</p>
Eggs	<p>Raw and under cooked egg</p> <p>Dishes that contain raw or slightly cooked eggs, e.g. homemade mayonnaise, egg nog, soufflés, soft meringue, homemade ice cream, mousses and hollandaise sauce</p> <p>Raw cake or cookie batter</p>	<p>Use Lion stamped eggs and cook well</p> <p>Shop-bought mayonnaise</p> <p>Shop-bought ice cream</p> <p>Products that use pasteurised egg or pasteurised egg liquid</p>
Milk and milk products	<p>All unpasteurised milk, This includes cow's milk, sheep and goat's milk, soya, rice oat and nut-based milks and other dairy products (the label should say if it has been pasteurised)</p> <p>Soft- whip ice cream from vans or machines</p> <p>Homemade ice cream with raw egg</p> <p>Unpasteurised cream and cream in cream cakes</p>	<p>Pasteurised, UHT, sterilised milk</p> <p>Tubs of ice cream or frozen yoghurt, wrapped bars or lollies Homemade ice cream using a pasteurised egg substitute</p> <p>Pasteurised or UHT cream, frozen cream cakes</p>

	High risk foods- should avoid	Safer alternatives
Yoghurt	<p>Probiotic, or bio yoghurt- Onken, Yeo Valley, Rachel's, Activia</p> <p>Probiotic drinking yoghurt e.g. Yakult, Actimel, Super market own</p> <p>Large sharing pots of Yoghurt</p>	<p>Pasteurised yoghurts or Live yogurts including Live, plain/ natural, sour cream, Greek and fruit yoghurt</p> <p>Prebiotic yoghurts -</p> <p>Small individual pots</p>
Cheese	<p>Deli counter cheese</p> <p>Unpasteurised soft cheese,</p> <p>Unpasteurised mould ripened soft cheese- Brie, Camembert and Goats Cheese</p> <p>Blue cheese- Danish Blue, Gorgonzola, Dolcelatte, Roquefort, Stilton</p>	<p>Pre-packaged cheese</p> <p>Unpasteurised soft cheese- cooked thoroughly</p> <p>Mould ripened soft cheese- cooked thoroughly</p> <p>Blue veined cheeses if cooked until piping hot</p> <p>Pasteurised soft cheese e.g. mozzarella, feta, hard goats cheese, halloumi and cottage cheese</p> <p>Processed soft cheese- Dairylee, laughing Cow, Philadelphia</p> <p>Hard cheese e.g. Cheddar, Red Leicester, Edam, Gouda, Parmesan</p>
Fruit, Vegetables and Salad	<p>Unwashed fruit and vegetables</p> <p>Raw sprouted seeds</p> <p>Unpasteurised fruit juices and smoothies</p> <p>Pre packed salads and salad from a deli counter</p>	<p>Washed fruit and vegetables</p> <p>Thoroughly cooked sprouted seeds</p> <p>Pasteurised fruit juice and smoothies</p> <p>Salad made from washed lettuce</p>

Additional advice for haematology patients

Raw nuts and nuts in shells should be avoided. Nuts need to be roasted before eating.

Raw pepper, herbs and spices are not recommended, these are safer when added during cooking.

Bottled mineral water, water from water coolers and water fountains should be avoided because they generally contain more bacteria and impurities than tap water.

Unpasteurised honey or honeycomb should be avoided.

Eating out

Eating out or consuming takeaways within the first 6-8 weeks after transplantation should be avoided. After this period, eating out can be enjoyed when following the basic principles outlined below:

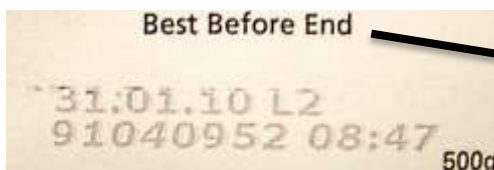
- Look up the hygiene rating of takeaways and restaurants at the Food Standards Agency website or download the free app to your smart phone or tablet. Choose ones with a rating of four or five.
- Avoid foods from buffets, salad bars, street vendors and deli counters.
- Make sure the food is hot all the way through and don't eat food that has been sitting under heat lamps.
- Choose 'well-done' meat.

Understanding use by dates



Use by dates appear on fresh foods that expire quickly.

It can be dangerous to eat foods beyond this point.



Best before dates show how long food will remain at its desired quality.

It is advisable to consume the product within a few days to reduce the risk of food borne illness.

Eating abroad

It is recommended that those travelling abroad discuss this with their transplant team in advance. The following tips will reduce the risk of food poisoning. These tips will help reduce the risk of food poisoning:

Drinks

- Avoid tap water, ice and drinks made from tap water and fresh fruit juice.
- Drink bottled canned and processed drinks.
- Boil tap water if it is to be used.

Food

- Hot food should be served piping hot.
- Avoid any foods that have been washed in tap water eg salads and fruit.
- Select vegetables and fruit that can be peeled.

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Further information

Department of Dietetics

Tel: 0151 706 3005 (renal dietitians)

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3005

e-mail renaldietitians@liverpoolft.nhs.uk

Please include your dietitians name in the subject box of the e-mail

Useful websites

Food Standards Agency - www.food.gov.uk

Beating blood cancer - www.bloodwise.org.uk

National Kidney Patient Association - www.kidney.org.uk/kpa

Author: Renal Dietitians

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