

Listeriosis Fact Sheet

What is Listeriosis?

Listeriosis is a disease caused by a bacterium living in water, mud, silage and forage. It can affect domestic and wild mammals, fowl and man.

If you have Listeriosis you may be experiencing the following symptoms:

- Mild symptoms similar to influenza
- Sudden onset with fever, headache, nausea and vomiting
- Occasionally delirium, coma and shock

Mainly in adults over 40 or infants under 3 weeks of age.

Especially dangerous in pregnant women.

How does it spread?

May be spread through consumption of contaminated food, eg unpasteurised milk and cheese and contaminated vegetables.

Some sporadic cases may be due to food borne transmission. May also be transmitted from mother to foetus in utero or during passage through an infected birth canal. May be inhaled or spread by venereal contact.

Incubation Period

The incubation period varies from 3 to 70 days.

Precautionary Measures

- Pregnant women and immuno compromised individuals should avoid contact with potentially infective materials on farms and known infected persons. They should eat only properly cooked meats and pasteurised dairy products.
- Pasteurise all dairy products where possible.

Control Measures

- Exclude symptomatic individuals from foodhandling and care of elderly residents.
- Stress proper handwashing.
- Quarantine of individuals is not needed.
- Your General Practitioner may be able to advise you of specific treatment.
- Cleanse the toilets, wash hand basins, door and flush handles thoroughly and frequently.