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Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.

Listeria and Pregnant Women¹

Amy Simonne and Donna Davis²

For most families, when the good news of pregnancy gets out, both parents-to-be and other family members begin to prepare for the best and safest environment for the new addition. But did you know that during pregnancy, both the fetus and the mother are even more susceptible to many foodborne illnesses? In fact, certain bacteria can cause an infection named listeriosis, which can be fatal to the unborn fetus.

Infected pregnant women may experience only mild, flu-like illness; however, their unborn children are at risk. Infection during pregnancy can lead to premature delivery, infection of the newborn, and even stillbirth. According to the CDC, approximately 2500 people become seriously ill and 500 people die each year from listeriosis (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005).

If you're pregnant, it's important to follow special recommendations for food safety. For example, don't eat hot dogs, luncheon meats, or deli meats, unless they're reheated until steaming hot. Also, avoid getting fluid from the meat packages on other foods, utensils, and food preparation surfaces, and wash hands after handling these foods (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005).

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Soft cheeses such as feta, brie, and camembert are *off-limits* unless they have labels that clearly state they are made from pasteurized milk. Also, do not eat refrigerated pâtés, meat spreads, or smoked seafood. Canned or shelf-stable pâtés, meat spreads, and smoked seafood are okay (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005).

A little diet modification can be just as important as a car seat when it comes to the safety of a new baby.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/listeria.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/listeria.wav

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