



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Dietary advice for patients at risk of infection from foods

Some of your questions answered

Issued by The Infection Control Team

Introduction

You have been advised to follow this dietary advice whilst in hospital because you have been identified as being at an increased risk of picking up infection from certain foods.

Why am I at increased risk?

Some of the reasons why you may be at increased risk are as follows:

- If you are undergoing cancer treatment such as chemotherapy
- If you have a diagnosis of cancer of the blood
- If you have neutropenia (low levels of white blood cells)
- If you are on medication that affects your ability to fight infection
- If you have had an organ transplant
- If you have had renal (kidney) failure
- If you are pregnant

If you are in one of the above groups, your body may not be able to fight infection; therefore small amounts of bacteria in certain foods could potentially be harmful.

How will this affect me while I'm in hospital?

Whilst you are on the ward, your nursing staff will help you choose appropriate food from the hospital menu and ensure you receive the recommended meal.

This table shows what types of foods to avoid and suitable alternatives.

Avoid	Alternatives
Soft cheeses and blue cheeses e.g. brie, camembert, mould-ripened cheese, ricotta etc.	Hard cheese that is labelled as pasteurized
Pre-packed sandwiches	All regenerated Apetito meals (hot meal delivered from kitchen)
Cold sliced meats (pre-packed or sliced to order) including deli items e.g. quiche	Cooked meat that is piping hot. Apetito meals. (hot meal delivered from kitchen)
Raw meat e.g. parma ham, salami	Cooked meat that is piping hot. Apetito meals. (hot meal delivered from kitchen)
Chilled seafood e.g. smoked salmon, cooked prawns, sashimi and sushi	Piping hot seafood
Pre-prepared salad vegetables or pre-sliced fruits	Whole fruits and salad vegetables (thoroughly washed before eating)
Pate (meat or vegetable)	
Unpasteurised dairy products, including live or bio yoghurts, probiotic drinks or yoghurts	Pasteurised milk, UHT milk, cheese as above. Pateurised egg
Raw or undercooked eggs e.g. homemade mayonnaise, homemade ice-cream, mousse, egg-nog, meringue, hollandaise sauce	Hard boiled eggs, shop-bought mayonnaise, ice cream made with pasteurized egg
Desserts / cakes that include cream	Bread and bakery products without cream

Can my family or friends bring food into hospital for me?

At Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust we do not routinely advise members of the public to bring in foods and snacks from outside. This is to allow us to monitor the foods our patients are consuming.

If this cannot be avoided, this leaflet will provide you and your visitors with advice on the foods which should be avoided and possible alternatives. You and your visitors should remember that certain foods carry a potential risk of infection whether provided in hospital or not.

How will this affect me if I have a poor appetite?

You may find that due to your illness or treatment you may not have a good appetite. If you do not feel like eating or feel you are losing weight, please mention this to the ward staff. They may order you smaller meals, extra snacks or nutritional supplements. You may also be referred to the dietician.

What if I already follow a special diet?

If you already follow a special diet such as coeliac, vegetarian and vegan; you can still follow these diets whilst following the advice in this leaflet.

Is there anything I can do to minimize the risk of infection from food while I am in hospital?

- Wash your hands thoroughly or use hand sanitiser after going to the toilet
- Wash your hands thoroughly or use hand santiser before eating food including snacks
- Do not keep opened/unused foods to eat later
- Discuss this with your visitors and allow them to view this leaflet

Is there anything I can do to minimise the risk of infection from food while I am at home?

- Wash your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet
- Wash your hands thoroughly before eating food, including snacks
- Wash your hands after handling pets and keep pets away from food
- Ensure your kitchen is clean
- Use food within the “use-by” dates
- Keep raw meat, poultry and fish at the bottom of your fridge, ensure they are well covered and prepared separately
- Keep a fridge thermometer on the lowest shelf in your fridge and ensure the temperature is no more than 5°C
- Wash or peel fresh items such as vegetables, fruits and salads before eating or cooking
- Make sure your food is well cooked. Foods should only be reheated once and when doing so you should ensure it is hot all the way through
- Store your foods appropriately i.e. in sealed containers; and cover open foods with lids or cling-film. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

PIN 508/V4

Review date: July 2023

© This material is the copyright of the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.