



FACT SHEET

Disease Prevention

for Parents and Childcare Providers

No High-Risk Foods for Children and Infants

Children and infants get sick more often and more easily than adults. This means that they are considered a “high-risk” group or “highly susceptible population” when it comes to disease. They have a higher risk for more severe illness, complications, and sometimes even death.

Foodborne Illness

In the U.S., the incidence of many diseases associated with food is highest in children out of all age groups. These illnesses have been linked with many food products, including undercooked or raw meat and eggs, raw sprouts, produce, unpasteurized dairy (raw milk) and juice products, undercooked or raw seafood, home canned products, jerky, and honey. Foodborne illness includes botulism and those illnesses caused by *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *Listeria*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Clostridium difficile*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Campylobacter*, *E. coli*, *Vibrio*, and *Yersinia*.

Foods to Avoid

Since children, toddlers, and infants are at higher risk for illness and complications from foodborne illness, they should not eat:

- Honey (Infants, associated with infant botulism, child’s doctor can determine appropriate age for consumption).
- Raw eggs in cookie dough, ice cream, sauces, or other products. Use pasteurized raw eggs, which have been heat-treated to kill germs and are available at the grocery store, usually in small pour cartons near the shell eggs.
- Undercooked meat, fish, and eggs. Cook meat and eggs thoroughly, including jerky.
- Raw milk products (not pasteurized), including cheese.
- Unpasteurized fruit juice.
- Home canned food (associated with botulism), except jams and jellies.
- Sprouts.

Over ⇒

Listeriosis

Children, especially babies, are also at risk for a rare but serious disease called listeriosis. The bacteria that causes this disease is found in raw meats, manure, dirt, water, and sometimes on raw vegetables. It can actually grow at refrigeration temperatures. Because it may be in our environment, there is a small chance it can contaminate our food. The bacteria is killed by cooking so it is a concern only on certain, ready to eat foods, those that are high in starch or protein and are not acidic. Examples are cold cuts, hot dogs, pate, dairy products, especially soft cheeses, homemade dairy based dressings and cold salads, cooked or smoked seafood, and leftovers. It may be a good idea to have children avoid these foods if the food has been stored in a refrigerator at above 41° F, has been in the refrigerator for longer than four days after opening or preparation, was not cooled quickly, or has been left out of the refrigerator for any length of time.

Safe Sources

It is also a good idea to obtain children's food from safe sources. Knowing as much as possible about a source and about how food is handled is important. For example, produce can be grown under many different conditions; it is not a good practice to consume produce that has been grown in ground fertilized with fresh cow manure. Grocery stores usually obtain food from licensed, inspected sources, but there are many options for where to obtain food.

Children benefit from diverse, nutritious, safe meals. The last thing we want is for children to get sick from their food. Avoiding these high risk products will help to keep our children's food safe.

Please contact us at (406) 447-8352 with any questions that you may have.