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Listeria and other Illnesses - Food to Avoid in Pregnancy

Once you realise that you are pregnant, it is important to alter your diet according to recommended guidelines. The Food Authority website is definitely worth consulting.

www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumers/life-events-and-food/pregnancy

If a pregnant woman contracts food poisoning she is more likely to become unwell than if she was not pregnant. Rarely food poisoning can also cause pregnancy complications and miscarriage.

In general, eating food that you have made at home, making sure hot food is properly cooked and taking care when eating leftovers, will save most cases of food poisoning. It is best to avoid leftovers more than 24hrs old and this even includes food that has been purchased and packaged eg bought sandwiches or salads. Eggs need to be cooked i.e. no runny yolks, no whole egg mayonnaise or mousse with raw eggwhite.

Certain salad ingredients also need to be avoided such as alfalfa and bean sprouts. Salad that you have washed and made yourself is the safest.

Australian made cheeses are produced from pasteurized milk however soft and semisoft cheeses can still be a source of listeria and should be avoided or cooked and eaten whilst hot. Eat well-cooked meat, eaten while hot and avoid cold cooked meat especially chicken and processed meat.

Fish is a good source of omega-3, however just remember that big fish eat little fish resulting in accumulation of mercury. To avoid this, eat the little fish, not the big fish i.e. avoid swordfish, deep-sea perch, or shark for example.

As well as being aware of what food should be avoided, it is essential to have clean hands when preparing and eating food. If you have other children don't be tempted to eat their leftovers as it is a good way to pick up whatever they are potentially about to come down with.

If you have nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, fevers or abdominal pain and you are pregnant it is advisable to contact your obstetrician for advice.