



Alemtuzumab safety advice:

Listeriosis prevention

How to prevent listeriosis before, during and after treatment.

For more information about this resource
and frequently asked questions, visit:
clinicspeak.com/listeriosis

For other resources for people
with MS, visit: clinicspeak.com

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What's the risk?

Your immune cells are dramatically reduced when taking alemtuzumab. Until your immune system recovers, the risk of contracting infections, such as listeriosis, through food is greater. This could lead to septicaemia (blood poisoning) and meningitis.

The average time for the immune system to recover is three months.



What can I do?

To reduce the risk of contracting listeriosis, follow these guidelines three months before taking alemtuzumab.

Alternatively, you can have one week of eradication antibiotics and then follow these guidelines one week before taking alemtuzumab.

Either of these options will ensure there is no listeria in your system.



Avoid high-risk foods

Ensure you avoid the following:

- Buffets, street food and takeaways
- Pre-prepared salads
- Ready-to-eat seafood (e.g. smoked fish)
- Raw seafood (e.g. some sushi)
- Precooked meat products (e.g. pâté, sliced meat)
- Pre-prepared fruit or vegetable drinks, unless pasteurised or canned
- Unpasteurised (raw) dairy foods, e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese, etc. (pasteurisation is the only way to destroy bacteria)
- Unpasteurised or soft ice cream served from machines (e.g. ice cream vans). Only eat ice creams served straight from the freezer
- Unpasteurised soft cheese (e.g. Brie, Camembert)
- Ready-to-eat foods stored for longer than one day in the refrigerator
- Raw vegetables, unless thoroughly washed and prepared yourself



Eat safe foods

These foods are safe to eat:

- Freshly prepared and cooked foods to be eaten immediately
- Meat that has been fully cooked through
- Hard cheeses, cheese spreads and processed cheeses
- Pasteurised fresh or UHT milk and yoghurt
- Tinned and pickled food
- Vegetables and salads you have thoroughly washed and prepared yourself



Prepare food safely

- Stick to 'use-by/best-before' dates
- Disinfect kitchen surfaces and sinks before and after food preparation
- Use food-specific chopping boards and wash utensils that come into contact with raw meat
- Regularly replace cloths and sponges and tea towels
- Wash, peel and then rewash all raw vegetables, salads and fruits before eating
- Thoroughly cook all food of animal origin, including eggs
- Ensure reheated food reaches a temperature of at least 70°C all the way through
- Ensure food is evenly and thoroughly heated when using microwaves



Store food correctly

- Keep food covered (in the fridge)
- Refrigerate all cooked food once cooled, ideally within one hour.
- Consume food within one day of opening
- Put stickers on your food to remind you when you opened/cooked it
- Check your fridge is below 5°C and recheck once a week
- Only defrost food at the bottom of the fridge (to prevent dripping)
- Don't defrost food in the microwave or oven
- Clean the inside of your fridge once a week with hot water and soap, then rinse



Be careful when eating out

- Avoid buffets and street foods
- Avoid salads and raw vegetable dishes
- Avoid ice
- Check food hygiene ratings at ratings.food.gov.uk
- Only eat food if it is served piping hot
- Tell anyone cooking for you, or living with you, about these guidelines
- Remember: it is OK to enquire about how food is cooked when eating out



What do I do after treatment?

- Continue to follow these guidelines for one month after treatment unless directed otherwise by your healthcare professional
- If you develop a fever, severe muscle aches, confusion or vomiting, contact your hospital (they may want to examine you and do a blood test)
- If you develop listeriosis, you will be treated with antibiotics

What do I need to do now?

- Dispose of all foods past their 'use-by' date
- Clean your fridge thoroughly with hot soap and water (store food in cool bags)
- Check the temperature of your fridge is below 5°C
- Replace food into fridge and place food stickers on each refrigerated item
- Place food stickers on each refrigerated item
- Attach the reminder magnets to your fridge



Further information

For further information, visit: food.gov.uk.

To see frequently asked questions, visit:
clinicspeak.com/listeriosis.

If you have any outstanding questions, please ask
your MS team.



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