

SA ON ALERT: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE DEADLY LISTERIOSIS OUTBREAK

What is Listeriosis?

According to Food Safety, Listeria is a bacterium found in soil, water and vegetation. It can also occur in some animals, including poultry and cattle. Raw milk and foods made from raw milk can also carry the bacteria.

Symptoms

People should seek medical attention if they experience the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Stiff neck
- Confusion
- General weakness
- Vomiting (sometimes preceded by diarrhoea)

Treatment

The majority of people infected by Listeria recover within seven days. However, those with a compromised immune system, older adults, infants or pregnant women require urgent medical care – treatment involves either a course of antibiotics or fluids through an IV drip.

The treatment of Listeriosis is usually symptomatic and depends on the severity of the disease. If your infection is severe, antibiotics may be recommended.

Home remedies include:

- Plenty of clear fluids such as water and tea.
- The BRAT diet (bananas, rice, apple sauce, toast) and other bland foods that won't irritate the stomach.
- Bed rest.

Prevention

- Do not drink raw (unpasteurized) milk. Also, be careful of foods that contain raw milk.
- Practice good hygiene in the kitchen. Wash your hands regularly, and make sure cutting boards, cutlery and crockery are cleaned properly.
- Thoroughly cook animal foods such as meat, poultry or fish. Rather overcook than undercook.
- Keep an eye on the expiry dates of perishable foods. Consume as soon as possible.

Adapted from: Health24 (Joshua Carstens and Marelize Wilke)

<https://www.health24.com/News/Public-Health/sa-on-alert-what-you-should-know-about-the-deadly-listeriosis-outbreak-20171205>