

# Listeria Outbreak Response Guide

*Listeria* is a group of bacteria that causes an illness called *Listeriosis*. *Listeria* infection is the third leading cause of death from foodborne illness in the United States.



## What are common signs and symptoms?

Signs and symptoms usually start 4 to 21 days after exposure to the bacteria and last around 1 to 3 days.  
Do not return to work until you are symptom-free for 24-72 hours without use of medications.



Fever & headache



Nausea & vomiting



Stillbirth



Meningitis & encephalitis

## How can *Listeria* spread in the kitchen?



Prolonged refrigeration of foods past their shelf life



Inadequate cleaning of food equipment, like deli slicers



Inadequate cooking of foods



Foods from unapproved sources

To prevent *Listeria* spread to customers, ensure food handlers are following First In, First Out (FIFO) procedures for refrigerated TCS foods. Ensure food contact surfaces of equipment, including deli slicers and cheese graters, are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized.

## What foods are commonly associated with *Listeria*?



Milk & soft cheeses



Deli & processed meats



Ice cream



Deli salads



Any foods an infected food handler touched

## What to do if you think your restaurant has an outbreak?



Notify SNHD at [outbreakresponse@snhd.org](mailto:outbreakresponse@snhd.org)



Deep clean & sanitize hard-to-clean food contact surfaces and clean-in-place food equipment.



Check expiration dates of refrigerated foods. Remove all products past shelf life.



Do not work while sick. Screen workers for illness before they clock in & send sick employees home immediately. Log employee illness, including vomiting & diarrheal incidents.



Consider reducing menu or temporarily closing until the source of the illnesses is eliminated.