

# Food safety advice for patients having chemotherapy

**Nutrition and Dietetics**

**Patient Information Leaflet**

## Introduction

A common side effect of chemotherapy can be to reduce the body's resistance to fight infections. It is therefore important to take extra care with the food you eat to minimise the risk of picking up a food-related infection.

The food safety information in this leaflet will help you to reduce your risk of picking up a food-related infection.

High risk foods to avoid	Safer alternatives
Unpasteurised milk	Pasteurised, sterilized, UHT milk, soya milk
Ice cream from soft whip machines	Ice cream which is packaged e.g. blocks of ice cream, ice lollies
Mould-ripened soft cheese (e.g. Brie, Camembert)	Processed cheese spread, cottage cheese, cream cheese (e.g. Dairylea, Kraft, Philadelphia), halloumi
Cheese made with unpasteurised milk (e.g. feta, parmesan)	Pasteurised parmesan, pasteurised mozzarella, paneer made with pasteurised milk
Blue-veined cheese (e.g. Stilton, Danish Blue)	Vacuum-packed hard cheese (e.g. Cheddar, Double Gloucester)
Products or supplements including yoghurt which are described on the label as bio or probiotic* (e.g. Yakult, Actimel)	Any yoghurt that is not described on the label as bio or probiotic including live*, plain, Greek and fruit yoghurts.
Raw eggs or undercooked eggs (including those in homemade mayonnaise, mousse, eggnog)	Hard boiled eggs. Shop-bought mayonnaise and other products made with pasteurised egg
Raw and undercooked meat, fish and poultry (e.g. meat which is still pink, sushi, smoked salmon)	Well-cooked meat, poultry and fish. Vacuum-packed cold meats such as ham or turkey. Tinned meat and fish
Raw or lightly cooked shellfish (e.g. oysters, mussels, prawns)	Well-cooked shellfish
Fresh meat or fish pate	Pasteurised pate; and paste in tins or jars
Takeaway foods particularly Chinese or Indian food with rice	Supermarket takeaways or fresh home-cooked food
Still, bottled mineral water or filtered water	Freshly run tap water or carbonated water

\*The live bacteria used in making yoghurts are not harmful so yoghurt described as 'live' is safe when you are having chemotherapy. However the bacteria used in bio or probiotic foods cannot be guaranteed to be safe so it is best to avoid them.

# General food hygiene information

## Shopping

- Always check use by or best before dates on packaging.
- Avoid buying food with damaged or broken packaging and fruit and vegetables which are bruised or going mouldy. Remember to wash and peel all fruit and vegetables.
- Avoid shops where raw and cooked meats are stored together. Where possible buy pre-packed deli items.
- Shop assistants should use utensils or gloves to handle food.
- Buy chilled or frozen foods last and take them home as quickly as possible. If you cannot get food home immediately a cool bag can help to keep food at the correct temperature.

## Storage

- Your fridge should be kept between 0°C and 5°C. Do not overload the fridge or keep the door open as this will increase the temperature.
- Thaw meat and poultry in a fridge and not at room temperature.
- Raw or defrosting meat or fish should be kept at the bottom of the fridge in a covered container to prevent dripping or leaking into the fridge.
- Never refreeze thawed food.
- Eggs should be stored in the fridge.
- Store and use all opened foods according to manufacturers' instructions. Any remaining tinned food should be emptied out into a clean container and covered with a lid or cling film.

## Food preparation

- Always wash your hands well before preparing any food and wash them between handling raw and cooked foods.
- Change your tea towels and dishcloths regularly and let dishes air dry if possible.
- Use separate knives and chopping boards for preparing raw meat and poultry, cooked foods and vegetables.
- Wash and peel all fruit and vegetables.

## Cooking

- Cook all food thoroughly following instructions on labels and in recipe books.
- Microwaves can be used for defrosting or reheating food according to manufacturers' instructions but they are not recommended for cooking food.
- Rice should be eaten as soon as it is cooked. Do not eat it once it has gone cold and do not reheat it.
- 

## Eating out

- Choose freshly prepared foods from reputable outlets. Avoid salad bars, street vendors, market stalls and ice cream vans.

If you have any questions or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet please contact:

Georgina Unit 01384 244028 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 0730510**

ਜੇਕਰ ਇਹ ਲੀਫਲੈੱਟ (ਛੋਟਾ ਇਸਤਿਹਾਰ) ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ) ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਟ ਇੰਫਰਮੇਸ਼ਨ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਨਾਲ **0800 0730510** ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

यदि आपको यह दस्तावेज़ अपनी भाषा में चाहिये तो पेशन्ट इनफरमेशन को-आरडीनेटर को टैलीਫ਼ोन ਨੰਬਰ **0800 0730510** पर फ़ोन करें।

જો તમને આ પત્રિકા તમારી પોતાની ભાષા (ગુજરાતી)માં જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને પેશન્ટ ઈન્ફોર્મેશન કો-ઓર્ડિનેટરનો **0800 0730510** પર સંપર્ક કરો.

আপনি যদি এই প্রচারপত্রটি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পোতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে পেশেন্ট ইনফরমেশন কো-অর্ডিনেটরের সাথে **0800 0730510** এই নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

إذا كنت ترغب هذه الوريقة مترجمة بلغتك الاصلية ( اللغة العربية ) , فرجاء ا اتصل بمنسق المعلومات للمريض

**0800 0730510** على التلقون Information Co-ordinator

حسب ضرورت اس لیفٹ کو اپنی زبان (اورد) میں حاصل کرنے کے لئے برہم پرائی ٹیلیفون نمبر **0800 0730510** پر وھٹ انفرمیشن کو-آورڈینٹر (مریضوں کے لئے معلومات کی فراہمی کے سلسلے میں اسٹر) کے ساتھ رابطہ کریں۔

Originator  
Date originated  
Date for review  
Version  
DGH ref:

Claire Rowley, Senior Dietician  
June 2014  
June 2017  
3  
DGH/PIL/00987