

# Know Your High-risk Foods

A series on high-risk foods

Choose safe. Eat safe.  
The best safeguard for  
your children's health.



Food Safety Advice for Infants  
and Young Children

Infants and young children are especially vulnerable to foodborne illnesses, also known as food poisoning, and related health complications. This is because their immune systems are still developing and they cannot fight off infections as effectively as adults can. Infants and young children also produce less stomach acid that kills harmful bacteria, making them at increased risk of being infected by food bugs.

## Raw or Undercooked Foods are High-risk Foods

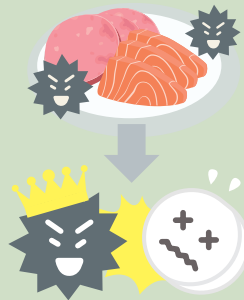
### Food Poisoning

Raw or undercooked foods are high-risk foods, as there is no or inadequate heat treatment to eliminate the microorganisms present, such as bacteria, viruses and parasites, that can pose risks to health. Common symptoms of food poisoning caused by eating food contaminated by microorganisms include vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and fever. Food poisoning can be dangerous for infants and young children because they can get dehydrated quickly due to vomiting or diarrhoea. In children under 5 years old, *E. coli* infection is more likely to lead to haemolytic uraemic syndrome, a severe complication that can cause chronic kidney disease, kidney failure and death.



### Superbugs

Raw or undercooked foods are also associated with the risk of 'superbugs'. They are microorganisms that have developed antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to stop a wide range of antimicrobial agents, antibiotics for example, from working against them. AMR is a serious public health threat. While cooking can kill 'superbugs', raw or undercooked foods are more likely to carry microorganisms including 'superbugs' that can be transferred to humans through food intake. Whether or not 'superbugs' can cause illnesses, they may transfer their antibiotic resistance genes to other bacteria inside the human body, therefore affecting the effectiveness of future use of antibiotics when needed.



## Babies Under 1 Year Old Should Not Eat Honey

Occasionally, honey may contain *Clostridium botulinum* that can produce toxins in a baby's intestines, leading to infant botulism, which causes difficulty breathing, muscle paralysis and even death. Honey may also cause tooth decay. Parents and caregivers should avoid giving honey to babies under 1 year old.



# Avoid Raw or Undercooked Foods and Choose Safer Alternatives

Let's learn about the foods to avoid and safer alternatives for infants and young children:

## Foods to Avoid



### Seafood



#### Fish served raw/ undercooked

(e.g. sushi, sashimi, smoked salmon)



#### All other raw/ undercooked seafood

(e.g. oysters, scallops, shrimps, cuttlefish)



## Safer Alternatives

Thoroughly cooked fish; smoked fish and precooked fish reheated thoroughly; canned fish



Thoroughly cooked seafood; smoked seafood and precooked seafood reheated thoroughly; canned seafood



### Eggs



#### Eggs served raw or undercooked

(unhardened whites and yolks, e.g. sunny-side-up eggs, scrambled eggs)

Fully cooked eggs



#### Salad and sandwich dressings or desserts made with raw eggs

(e.g. Caesar dressing, mayonnaise, puddings)

Salad and sandwich dressings or desserts containing no raw eggs or made with pasteurised eggs





## Meat

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### Raw/ undercooked meat and offal

(e.g. congees served with undercooked minced beef/pork liver, partially cooked steak)

### Thoroughly cooked meat and offal



### Cold meat and meat products

(e.g. ham, sausages, pate)

### Cold meat and meat products reheated thoroughly



## Dairy products

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### Soft cheeses (e.g. Feta, Brie, Camembert) and blue cheeses (e.g. Danish blue, Gorgonzola and Roquefort) made from raw milk

### Cheeses made from pasteurised milk



## Vegetables

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### Ready-to-eat raw vegetables

(e.g. prepackaged salad vegetables, seed sprouts, raw greens in sandwiches)

### Thoroughly washed and cooked fresh vegetables



# 5 Keys to Preventing Food Poisoning

When preparing food for infants and young children, you should always follow the 5 keys below to reduce the risk of food poisoning:



**1**  
**Choose**

Choose fresh and wholesome materials



**2**  
**Clean**

Keep hands and utensils clean



**3**

**Separate**

Separate raw and cooked foods



**5**

**Safe Temperature**

Keep food at a safe temperature



**4**

**Cook**

Cook thoroughly



## Infant formula, breast milk and baby food

Infant formula, breast milk and baby food are rich in nutrient and can easily spoil if not handled properly.

- Powdered infant formula should be prepared with boiled water no less than  $70^{\circ}\text{C}$  to kills harmful bacteria which may be present. Cool the prepared formula quickly to feeding temperature by holding the bottle under cold running water. All equipment used for feeding babies and preparing infant formula should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised. Consume the prepared formula within two hours.
- Expressed breast milk should be stored in the fridge if not consumed immediately to inhibit growth of harmful bacteria.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to prepare and serve prepackaged baby food.



Please refer to the websites of Family Health Service of the Department of Health for details:

Preparation of  
infant formula



Storage of  
expressed breast milk

