



# *Listeria monocytogenes* and ready-to-eat foods

## What is *Listeria monocytogenes*, why should I care?

- *Listeria monocytogenes* is a bacteria that causes the illness listeriosis.
- Listeriosis can make people sick or kill them.
- People who are more at risk from listeriosis are pregnant women, babies, the elderly and people with weakened immunity.
- Most cases of listeriosis occur in people who have consumed ready-to-eat food and beverages containing high numbers of *Listeria*.

## Which ready-to-eat foods are the most risky?

Chilled foods with long shelf life



Cooked foods that have been further handled



Foods that are minimally processed



## How does *Listeria* get into food processing areas?

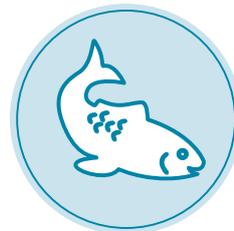
People's shoes, clothes, lunches, and bags.

Packaging materials.

Pallets, fork lifts, boxes, tools, ladders – anything brought in from outside.

Raw foods and ingredients.

Drips, aerosols and condensate from chillers, air conditioners and hoses.



## Looking for more information?

Check out the MPI *Listeria* factsheets and guides by searching "Listeria" on the MPI website:

[www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz). Contact MPI: [info@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:info@mpi.govt.nz) or 0800 00 83 33

## Do your part to keep *Listeria* out of the processing area



Always follow all the company's hygiene rules and practices.



Regular and thorough cleaning and sanitation.



Check that floors, equipment and all food contact surfaces are in good condition with no niches where *Listeria* can live.



Report damaged, worn out, hard to clean, difficult to get at equipment, tools, floors, welds, points of attachment, etc.



Make sure tools and equipment brought in to do repairs and maintenance are thoroughly cleaned beforehand.



If equipment has been repaired, had parts replaced or not used for a while, thoroughly clean before it is used again.



Be observant. If you see someone doing something that could bring *Listeria* into the processing area, tell a supervisor.



Look for places where water is pooling, dripping or condensate collecting.

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