



The Beacon

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Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

“Guiding your way to better health management”

What is Listeriosis?

Listeriosis is food poisoning caused by eating foods contaminated with the *Listeria monocytogenes* (*L. monocytogenes*) bacterium. In the United States, an estimated 2,500 people become seriously ill with listeriosis each year. In pregnant women, the infection can result in miscarriage, premature delivery, serious infection of the newborn or even stillbirth.

Listeriosis affects mainly pregnant women, newborns, the elderly, and adults with impaired immune systems. Healthy adults and children sometimes are infected with *L. monocytogenes*, but they rarely become seriously ill.

What causes Listeriosis

L. monocytogenes is found in soil and water.

- Vegetables can become contaminated from the soil or from manure used as fertilizer.
- Animals can carry the bacteria and can contaminate meats and dairy products.
- Processed foods, such as soft cheeses and cold cuts, can be contaminated after processing.
- Unpasteurized (raw) milk or foods made from unpasteurized milk can be contaminated.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of listeriosis include fever, muscle aches, and sometimes nausea or diarrhea. If infection spreads to the nervous system, symptoms such as headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, or convulsions can occur.

How is Listeriosis diagnosed?

Listeriosis is diagnosed based on a medical history and physical exam. Your doctor will ask you questions about your symptoms, foods you have recently eaten, and your work and home environments.

How is it treated?

An otherwise healthy person who is not pregnant typically does not need treatment. Symptoms will usually go away within a few weeks.

If you are pregnant and get listeriosis, antibiotics can often prevent infection of the fetus or newborn. Babies who have listeriosis receive the same antibiotics as adults, although a combination of antibiotics is often used until your doctor is certain the cause is listeriosis.

How to prevent Listeriosis?

- You can prevent listeriosis by practicing safe food handling (adapted from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).
- Shop safely. Bag raw meat, poultry, or fish separately from other food items. Drive home immediately after

finishing your shopping so that you can store all foods properly.

- Prepare foods safely. Wash your hands before and after handling food. Wash fresh fruits and vegetables by rinsing them well with running water.
- Store foods safely. Cook, refrigerate, or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, fish, and ready-to-eat foods within 2 hours. Make sure your refrigerator is set at 40°F (4°C) or colder. Clean up any spills in your refrigerator, especially juices from hot dogs, raw meat, or poultry.
- Cook foods safely. Use a clean meat thermometer to determine whether foods are cooked to a safe temperature. Reheat leftovers to at least 165°F (74°C). Do not eat undercooked hamburger, and be aware of the risk of food poisoning from raw fish (including sushi), clams, and oysters.
- Serve foods safely. Keep cooked hot foods hot [140°F (60°C) or above] and cold foods cold [40°F (4°C) or below].
- Follow labels on food packaging. Food packaging labels provide information about when to use the food and how to store it.
- When in doubt, throw it out. If you are not sure whether a food is safe, don't eat it.

Med-Cert News

The Med-Cert staff wishes you a very Happy Thanksgiving!!!

Did you know??

Unless food is mixed with saliva you cannot taste it...



Ask A Nurse

Q: Since I started taking cholesterol lowering medicine, my skin has become very dry. Is there a connection?

A: Probably. These drugs block an enzyme that helps your body make cholesterol, one of three fats found naturally in skin.

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Q: Does hair grow back thicker after shaving?

A: No. It just seems that way because shaving cuts hair at its thicker base. When that blunt edge emerges, it can feel stiffer and denser than normal.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States, aside from skin cancer. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), an estimated 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed among women in the United States this year. Visit their web site for more information at www.nbcam.org

DON'T FORGET TO PRECERTIFY

Med-Cert's Toll-free Precert Telephone Number is (800)-356-7126 and should be reflected on your health insurance ID cards.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the employee/participant/member to make sure precertification has been done. Many plans will reduce your benefit amount if you fail to precertify.

Group Health Plans vary from one employer to the next so it is important for you to know what your health plan requires. Call the customer service representative for your health plan if you have questions.

Below is a list of some of the common Standard Precertification Notification Requirements.

- *Inpatient Hospital Stays*
- *Inpatient Treatment for Mental and Emotional Conditions or Substance Abuse*
- *Inpatient Rehabilitation Therapy*
- *Skilled Nursing Care*
- *Outpatient Stays over 12 hours*
- *Outpatient Surgeries*
- *Physical Therapy after first 6 visits*
- *Speech Therapy after first 6 visits*
- *Home Health Care*
- *Hospice Care*
- *Maternity – on confirmation of pregnancy (or at least 2 months prior to delivery) and again on admission for delivery*
- *Outpatient Procedures – refer to your Employee Benefit Plan booklet as some plans require precertification for outpatient procedures*

Med-Cert provides:

Utilization Management, Maternity Management, Large Case and Wellness Disease Management, Transplant Coordination and Stop Loss Assessments

For information on any of our services, please call

866-261-5657 (toll free). We are on the

Internet. Visit us at:

www.medcertinc.com

Recipe Corner



Cranberry, Sausage and Apple Stuffing

Ingredients

- 1 pound sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1/4 cup butter
- 6 cups coarsely chopped leeks
- 3 tart apples - peeled, cored and chopped
- 2 cups chopped celery
- 4 teaspoons poultry seasoning
- 2 teaspoons dried rosemary, crushed
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 12 cups white bread cubes, baked until slightly dry
- 1 1/3 cups chicken stock
- salt and black pepper to taste

Directions

1. Cook and stir sausage in a large skillet over medium heat, crumbling coarsely, for about 10 minutes. Remove sausage to a large bowl with a slotted spoon. Empty pan of grease.
2. Into the same pan melt the butter. Add the leeks or onions, apples, celery and poultry seasoning; cook until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the rosemary, dried cranberries and cooked sausage. Mix all with the dried bread cubes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Moisten with the chicken stock.
3. Stuff turkey with about 5 cups for a 14 pound turkey. Add additional chicken stock to moisten stuffing if needed. Remaining stuffing can be baked in a covered buttered casserole at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for about 45 minutes. Uncover and bake for another 15 minutes to brown top.



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert, Inc. Our sources for this edition are Web MD and Prevention magazine.