



Food  
Standards  
Agency  
food.gov.uk



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Tracey Smith, Food Standards Agency  
tracey.smith@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

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## Food Standards Agency strategy 2015 - 2020

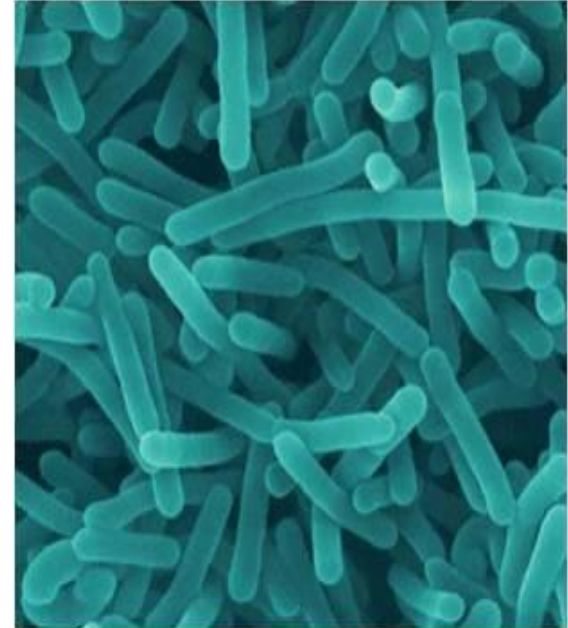


- Food is safe and what it says it is, and we have access to an affordable diet, and can make informed choices about what we eat, now and in the future
- We will put consumers first in everything we do

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# What is listeriosis?

- Listeriosis, the infection caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*, is rare but is the number one cause of death due to foodborne disease in the UK (per population)
- Most cases are hospitalised and approximately a third die
- Generally associated with ready-to-eat foods - 73% of listeriosis outbreaks (2003-2012) were associated with hospital sandwiches



## Chilled ready-to-eat foods

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KEEP THESE FOODS  
**SAFE**

Listeria can be found in a number of ready-to-eat foods such as:

-  Cooked sliced meats
-  Smoked fish
-  Soft mould-ripened cheeses and soft blue cheeses
-  Pre-prepared sandwiches
-  Prepared salads
-  Pâté

Certain RTE foods may be a higher risk because they:

- Are able to support the growth of *L. monocytogenes*
- Are ready-to-eat (no further processing)
- Generally have a long shelf life
- Need to be kept chilled

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# Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by listeriosis



# Why is *Listeria monocytogenes* such a problem?

- Widely distributed in the environment
- Organism is adaptable and persistent (known to survive and colonise in food manufacturing environments) – forms biofilms
- Prolonged incubation up to 90 days
- Salt tolerant and can grow at pH levels as low as 4.4
- Can survive in low moisture foods ( $A_{ww}$  0.91)
- Grows at refrigerated temperatures and survives freezing

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LISTERIA**

Food Standards Agency

**1 THE FACTS ABOUT LISTERIA**

Listeria is a bacterium that usually develops after eating food contaminated by Listeria monocytogenes. It is relatively rare, but is the second common cause of death from food poisoning in the UK.

Cases in Europe increased by 6.6% between 2012 and 2013 and have been increasing over the past five years.

Most people infected with Listeria are hospitalized. Approximately a third die.

The disease costs the UK economy an estimated £245 million every year.

In 2013 there were 192 laboratory confirmed cases in the UK.

**2 WHO HAS A HIGHER RISK OF LISTERIOSIS**

The elderly and frail. People with weakened immune systems (due to illness or disease). Pregnant women and their unborn babies, newborns and the very young.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS**

In mild cases of listeriosis, symptoms can include:

- A high temperature
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea (which usually goes within three days)

However, the bacteria can spread from the intestines, with symptoms such as:

- Stomach tenderness
- Joint pain
- Muscle aches
- Stiff neck

Severe cases can lead to serious complications, such as:

- Meningitis
- Septicemia

**3 KEEP THESE FOODS SAFE**

Listeria can be found in a number of ready-to-eat foods such as:

- Cooked chilled meats
- Cooked fish
- Soft fresh ripened cheeses and soft blue cheeses
- Pre-prepared sandwiches
- Prepared salads
- Pies

**4 HOW YOU CAN AVOID IT**

Keep chilled ready-to-eat foods in the fridge below 5°C. Consume them as fast as possible after the date at 5°C than at 4°C.

Always follow the instructions on the storage label and consume foods by the 'use by' date.

Heat softwares until they are steaming hot.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly.

For more information, visit [food.gov.uk/listeria](http://food.gov.uk/listeria) and [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/listeria](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/listeria)

Join the conversation on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/food.gov.uk), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/food.gov.uk) using #Listeria

Sign up to our e-alerts on [food.gov.uk/alerts](http://food.gov.uk/alerts), Watch us on [food.gov.uk/youtube](http://food.gov.uk/youtube), View our jobs on [planet.nhs.uk/jobs](http://planet.nhs.uk/jobs)

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# Guidance for healthcare and care settings

## REDUCING THE RISK OF VULNERABLE GROUPS CONTRACTING LISTERIOSIS

GUIDANCE FOR HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL CARE ORGANISATIONS



Working with



The new guidance is specific to the control of *Listeria* and is designed to determine what good practice steps can be put in place to reduce the risk of *L. monocytogenes* in chilled ready-to-eat foods

Includes:

- Control of contamination
- Control of growth
- Management controls
  - procurement/purchase
  - microbiological testing
  - supplier assessment

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## Managing *Listeria* – what can you do?

### HACCP based Food Safety Management Procedures

- Understand sources of *L. monocytogenes*
- Procurement and purchasing procedures
- Put steps in place to control contamination (cleaning and disinfection procedures)
- Control growth (safe food preparation and storage)
- Maintain cold chain (food service)
- Control food brought in by residents and visitors
- Understand food pathways in your organisation

### Verification



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## Managing *Listeria* – sources of *L. monocytogenes*

- Dirt and soil, including dirty premises and equipment
- Food handlers
- Raw foods (cross-contamination)
- Water and condensation
- Drains and drainage gulleys
- Areas prone to ‘pooling’ of water

# Managing *Listeria* – procurement and purchasing procedures

- Use reputable suppliers
- Have approved suppliers
- Supplier assessment
- Have a contingency in place for *when* things go wrong

## Annex 1: Methods of supplier assessment – Quick reference guide

It may be useful for healthcare/social care organisations to review available guidance when undertaking supplier assessments.

Method of assessment	Organisation type	Assessment criteria
Independent third party certification	Medium and large organisations for example national and regional purchasing organisations, care groups, contract caterers and on-site retailers to healthcare/social care organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent third party certification means food suppliers are audited/assessed and certificated for food safety by an independent auditing body.</li> <li>• The audit/assessment should be carried out against a recognised audit standard, which should include <i>L. monocytogenes</i> specific requirements.</li> <li>• Third party assessment/audits should be carried out by suitably qualified and experienced food safety auditors.</li> <li>• Preferably the third party organisations and/or audit standard should be UKAS accredited.</li> <li>• A system should be in place to ensure that certification is valid for the products supplied and maintained up to date.</li> <li>• Suppliers that fail their third party assessment or whose certification lapses should not be used until the supplier has been re-assessed and found to be satisfactory.</li> </ul>

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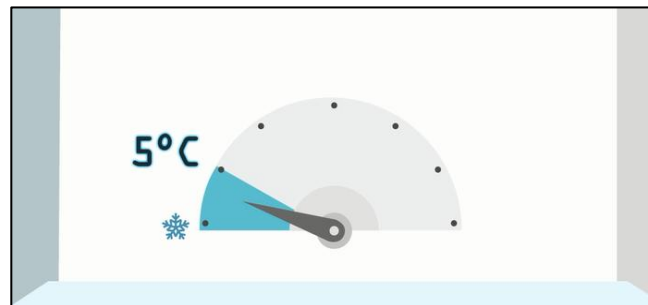
## Managing *Listeria* – cleaning and disinfection

- Structure and equipment must be maintained in a good condition and designed to be easy to clean
- Appropriate cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Regular two-stage cleaning and disinfection is important to avoid the formation and build-up of biofilms
- Staff training
  
- Personal hygiene controls
- Appropriate handwashing

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## Managing *Listeria* – control growth

- **Think about design**
  - Sufficient refrigerators
  - Close to food preparation
- **Think about work practices**
  - Prepare food in small batches
  - Chill prepared food immediately
  - Pre-chill items like mayonnaise, tuna and bread
  - If you have space pre-chill crockery
- **Maintain cold chain through to service**



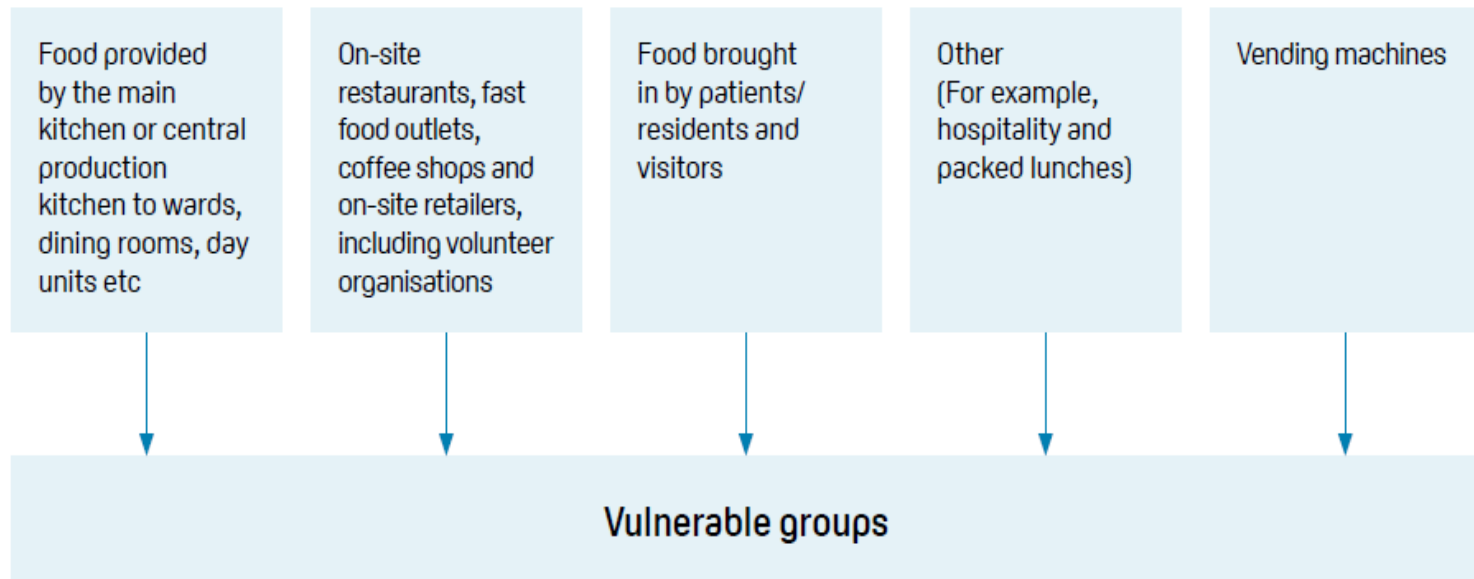
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## Managing *Listeria* – food brought in by visitors

- Have a policy in place and communicate to residents, visitors and staff
- Outline requirements for donated food
- Provide guidance to staff
- Discourage visitors from bringing in foods that are higher risk (foods that need to be kept chilled)

# Managing *Listeria* – food pathways

## EXAMPLES OF FOOD PATHWAYS



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## Managing *Listeria* – Verification

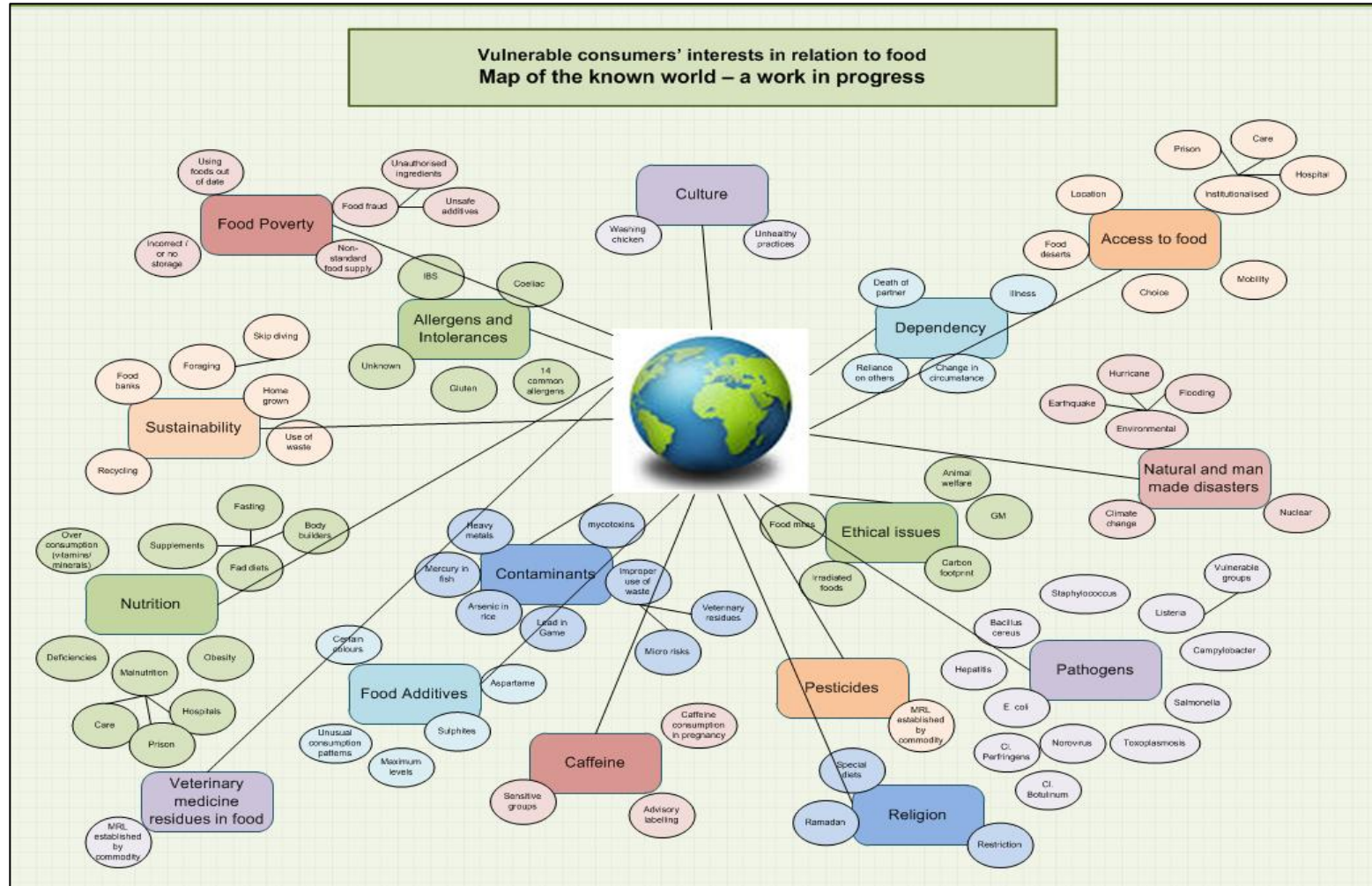
Checking or confirming that the HACCP–based procedures are achieving the intended effect (food safety hazards are under control)

**Confirmation that the food business is doing what it had planned to do**

Examples:

- Day-to-day supervision
- Internal and external audits
- Complaint monitoring
- Customer feedback

# Open Policy making for the FSA – the interests of vulnerable consumers in relation to food





**THANK YOU  
ANY QUESTIONS?**

