



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Food safety for people having chemotherapy or immunotherapy

Dietetics

Patient information

## What is this information about?

While you have chemotherapy or immunotherapy, you are at higher risk of picking up an infection. This includes infections which come from food and drink (also known as food-borne infections). The following information contains advice on how to reduce your risk of picking up a food-borne infection. Keep this information in safe place so you can refer to it when you need to.

## What can I do to keep my food as safe as possible?

- Wash your hands with soap and water before eating and preparing meals.
- Clean kitchen surfaces regularly.
- Use foods and drinks within their use-by dates.
- Set your fridge temperature to 5oC and try not to overfill it, as this can affect the temperature.
- Store raw and ready-to-eat foods separately to avoid cross contamination.
- Wash your fruit and vegetables before eating them.
- Defrost food in the fridge.
- Cook or reheat foods until piping hot all the way through.
- Check the Food Hygiene Rating of restaurants and takeaways at: <https://ratings.food.gov.uk/>
- Take care with food from salad bars, self-service counters and hot delis.

# Are there any foods that I need to take care with?

- Make sure that poultry (chicken and turkey) and pork is thoroughly cooked, steaming hot all the way through and the juices run clear.
- Do not wash raw meat as it increases the risk of cross-contamination.
- Avoid raw fish. For example, sushi or oysters. Both smoked fish and shellfish can be eaten if they are thoroughly cooked and steaming hot all the way through.
- Avoid yoghurts labeled as 'Bio' or 'Live'. Choose a plain, Greek or fruit yoghurt instead.
- Avoid pâté.
- Avoid fermented and probiotic foods e.g. fermented foods and drinks, for example, Kimchi, Kombucha, Kefir.
- Avoid unpasteurised dairy products.

Take caution with the following ready-to-eat foods. They are slightly higher risk for carrying infections but if eaten fresh, within use-by date and stored properly you can lower the risk:

- Cooked sliced meats including cured meats.
- Pre-prepared sandwiches and salads.
- Pre-prepared cut fruits.
- Loose products from re-fill stations e.g. herbs, spices, dried fruit and nuts.

## Can I eat eggs?

Yes, as long as they have the British Lion stamp on them. British Lion Stamped eggs can be used in all types of egg dishes. See image below of an egg with a stamp on.



## Can I eat cheese?

You can eat cheese, but avoid:

- Cheese made with unpasteurised milk, such as soft-ripened goat's cheese.
- Mould-ripened soft cheese, such as Brie, Camembert and Chèvre (unless cooked until steaming hot).
- Soft blue cheeses, such as Danish blue, Gorgonzola and Roquefort (unless cooked until steaming hot).

## Who can I contact for further information and advice?

### Oncology dietitians

**Phone:** 01243 788122 Ext. 35201

**Email:** [uhsussex.srhoncologydietitians@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.srhoncologydietitians@nhs.net)

This information is intended for patients receiving care at Worthing and St.Richard's hospital Chichester.

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