

Environmental Assessment— Listeria Monocytogenes



Listeria monocytogenes (L. mono) is found in moist kitchen environments and can survive and even grow under refrigeration temperatures. L. mono is generally transmitted in contaminated food and drinks. Foods previously implicated include hot dogs and deli meats, cheeses, ice cream, raw vegetables, raw poultry and meats, unpasteurized milk, raw and smoked fish and leftover foods. Proper date marking is critical to prevent Listeriosis in ready-to-eat foods.

Some key items to focus on while investigating a suspected Listeriosis:

- **Interview and observe**—Interview management and employees regarding their food preparation practices. Observe if kitchen food preparation surfaces are properly cleaned and sanitized to prevent cross contamination.
- **Review food flows of suspected foods**—Determine the potential for cross contamination hazards of the suspect food item from receiving to service.
- **Observe**—Check the date marking practices of deli meats, cheeses and leftovers.
- **Assess**—Check whether proper reheating of leftovers to 165°F and monitoring of refrigerated storage temperature have occurred. Listeria survives and grows in temperatures below 34°F.
- **Provide corrective actions**—Discuss and correct improper food safety practices while onsite.
- **Collect samples**—Find out if there is any suspect food item remaining at the establishment. If yes, set it aside and do not serve it. Notify the Indiana Department of Health and discuss whether sampling would be appropriate. If yes, the Food Protection Division may assist with the coordination, collection and transport of food samples.

When investigating Listeria infections at a food establishment, focus on: cross contamination, improper cleaning of equipment, improper holding temperatures, date marking, improper cooling and inadequate reheating.

Indiana is a voluntary participant with the CDC's National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS). Please visit the CDC's [NEARS](#) website for more information. Please contact the Indiana Department of Health Food Protection Division Rapid Response Team for assistance with the environmental assessment and completing NEARS forms, sampling supplies and any other questions regarding the environmental response for a suspected Listeria infection.

For assistance, please contact:
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