Safe Food Choices
Foods to Avoid If You're Extra Vulnerable to Foodborne Illness

Food poisoning can affect anyone, but certain groups of people are more susceptible: older adults, pregnant women, young children, and people with weakened immune systems. These groups are more likely to get sick from contaminated food and, if they do get sick, the effects are much more serious. Take extra precaution when shopping and preparing food for those at most risk to food poisoning.

Checklist of foods to avoid if vulnerable to foodborne illness:

RAW OR UNDERCOOKED EGGS
Be sure to cook foods with raw eggs or egg mixtures thoroughly to 160°F, and avoid raw or undercooked eggs, such as:
- Soft-cooked eggs or poached eggs if runny
- Unpasteurized eggnog
Avoid homemade foods with raw or undercooked eggs (unless made with pasteurized eggs or a liquid egg substitute), such as:
- Caesar salad dressing
- Hollandaise sauce
- Some puddings and custards
- Chocolate mousse
- Tiramisu
- Cookie dough, cake batter

RAW DAIRY PRODUCTS
- Raw or unpasteurized milk or cheeses
- Some fresh soft cheeses such as Brie, Camembert, blue-veined varieties, Mexican-style queso fresco

RAW FISH AND SHELLFISH
- Sushi, sashimi
- Ceviche
- Tuna carpaccio
- Raw molluscan shellfish: raw clams, oysters, mussels, scallops
- Refrigerated smoked fish: lox, jerky, kippered and nova-style

RAW OR RARE MEAT OR UNDERCOOKED POULTRY
- Raw or rare hamburger
- Carpaccio (thin shavings of raw beef fillet)
- Beef or steak tartare

OTHER
- Unpasteurized, refrigerated pate or meat spreads (these are safe if canned or cooked to 165°F)
- Deli salads specifically ham, chicken and seafood salad
- Raw sprouts including alfalfa, clover and radish sprouts
- Unpasteurized fruit and vegetable juice
- Hot dogs and deli meats (unless first cooked to 165°F)

NOTE: Most pre-made foods from grocery stores, such as Caesar dressing, pre-made cookie dough or packaged eggnog are made with pasteurized eggs.