

# Listeria advice for patients taking Lemtrada (Alemtuzumab)

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about taking Lemtrada (Alemtuzumab) and reducing your risk of Listeria.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

## What is Listeria and what is the risk?

Listeria are bacteria which may cause an infection called Listeriosis.

Listeriosis has increased in the UK, particularly in people with compromised immune systems. This includes those taking Alemtuzumab.

In most people, listeriosis is mild and causes symptoms including a high temperature (fever), vomiting and diarrhoea. These symptoms usually pass within three days without the need for treatment.

However, in rare cases, the infection can be more severe and spread to other parts of your body, causing serious complications, such as meningitis. Common signs of severe listeriosis include a stiff neck, severe headache and tremors. It could be easy to mistake these symptoms as symptoms of MS, so if you do develop any of these symptoms after receiving alemtuzumab, please contact your MS nurse or GP to check.

## What can I do to reduce my risk?

Follow the advice below for at least four weeks before starting your treatment and four weeks after treatment.

### Food hygiene

- Make sure your fridge is set to 5°C (5 degrees centigrade) or below
- Don't use food after its 'use by' date and always check the storage instructions on the label
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after preparing food, before eating and after using the toilet
- Wash fruit and vegetables well before cooking or eating
- Avoid using buffet style counters.

### Avoid the following food:

- All unpasteurised dairy products such as soft cheeses, unpasteurised milk, soft whip ice-cream, live or probiotic yoghurts
- Raw or lightly cooked eggs such as homemade mayonnaise or mousse (hard boiled eggs and well-cooked scrambled eggs are OK)
- Raw or undercooked meat and fish such as sushi or shellfish
- Smoked meats, pate and ready cooked hot chicken
- Unwashed fruit or vegetables, including salad.

## Useful sources of information

[www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/listeria-guidance-june2016.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/listeria-guidance-june2016.pdf)

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about Listeria and Alemtuzumab, please contact the MS nursing team: Sarah White on 020 8725 4111, Maria Vega Sota on 020 8725 4469 or Sophia Starke/Helen Davies on 020 8266 6528 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Out of hours, please leave a message or contact your out of hours GP service if your symptoms get worse.

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

