

Food Advice for Immuno-Compromised Cancer Patients

Information for Patients

During and after your cancer treatment your immune system becomes weakened (you become immune-compromised). This is because the number of white blood cells which would normally help to fight these organisms, are falling (neutropenia). Therefore, good food safety is important.

Why do I need advice on what to eat?

At this time you are at a greater risk of developing infections from bacteria or fungi which can be found in small amounts in many foods. Some foods we eat contain small amounts of bacteria or other harmful microbes which for most people this is not a problem. However when your white blood cells are lower than normal you may be more likely to become unwell if you come into contact with bacteria. This booklet outlines some simple steps to help reduce this risk both at home and when eating out.

How long do I need to keep to these guidelines?

Every patient is unique and the length of time you are encouraged to follow these guidelines can vary. In general we advise that you follow these guidelines during treatment and for three months after your last course of treatment, or until your immuno-suppression medication is stopped if you are taking these.

**Note: Immuno-suppression medication could be started at any given point therefore these guidelines may need to be restarted as these act on your immune system.
Please discuss with your medical team or dietitian.**

Food Safety - General advice

The following food safety and hygiene advice can help you reduce the chances of getting a food borne infection.

Shopping

- Avoid buying food with damaged or broken packaging.
- Check all use by dates and best before dates on packaging.
- Transport chilled and frozen foods home as quickly as possible. Use an insulated container or cool bag to help keep food at the correct temperature.
- Pack raw meats, poultry and fish in a separate carrier bag to other foodstuffs: remember the packaging may be contaminated.
- Avoid buying foods like meat, cheese and bread from open deli counters or sweets and chocolates from pick and mix stalls.

Food preparation

- Always wash your hands with warm soapy water before handling and preparing any foods.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet, sneezing and after touching any pets, hair, dirty washing, rubbish or raw foods.
- Use a separate towel or use kitchen paper to dry hands. Do not use a tea towel.
- Cover any cuts and grazes with a waterproof plaster.
- If possible avoid preparing food if you have been unwell with food related sickness and/or diarrhoea until at least 48 hours after symptoms have passed.
- Wash salad vegetables and fruit (if eaten with the skin on) thoroughly.
- Do not wash poultry under the tap as this can spread bacteria over the sink and work surfaces. Leave unwashed.

Storage

- Check fridge temperature. Fridges should be 0-5°C.
- Store cooked foods at the top of the fridge.
- Store raw or defrosting food at the bottom of the fridge in a covered container to stop it dripping or leaking out into the fridge.
- Use and store food following the manufacturer's instructions. Use within best before or use by dates.
- Keep eggs in the fridge.
- Check your freezer temperature. Freezers should be below -18°C.
- Do not refreeze thawed foods.
- If food is frozen at home, label and date when put in the freezer and use within freezer star guideline on packet or inside door of the freezer

Kitchen hygiene

- Keep the kitchen clean.
- Use a food safe sanitiser or disinfectant on food contact surfaces and hand contact surfaces (e.g. Microwave handles, fridge door handles, taps).
- Make sure any cloths or sponges are regularly bleached, disinfected or changed.
- Keep pets away from work surfaces, food and your dishes.
- Avoid cross - contamination of food by changing or washing chopping boards and utensils between raw and cooked foods. Ideally you should have three boards; one for raw meat, one for cooked meat and one for other foods.

Cooking

- Thaw meat and poultry in the fridge and not at room temperature.
- Always cook raw foods thoroughly and ensure the food is piping hot all the way through with juices running clear and with no pink showing.
- Cooking to above 63°C will kill most bacteria, but it is recommended that all cooked food reaches at least 70°C in the centre for a minimum of two minutes.
- Always follow the manufacturer's cooking guidelines and do not shorten cooking times.
- Pre-heat the oven to make sure food is cooked at the recommended temperature.
- Always wash your hands before eating.

Reheating foods

- Avoid reheating rice and takeaway food.
- For home cooked foods, cover and cool food at room temperature within an hour after cooking and then place in the fridge or freezer.
- Eat reheated home cooked food within 24 hours of preparing or defrosting it. Reheat only once and ensure it is piping hot. Eat immediately.

Eating out - *Use reliable / reputable outlets*

- Ask for food to be cooked fresh rather than anything that has been standing around.
- Avoid salad bars / deli, street vendors, market stalls and ice cream vans.
- Look for the food standards agency five star rating guides, with five being the top score for hygiene and cleanliness.

You can check businesses food hygiene rating on the following website: <https://ratings.food.gov.uk/>





This is why it is recommended that friends and relatives do not bring in takeaways / foods for you while you are in hospital. Any prepared food not eaten at the time it is prepared has time for bacteria to grow. This means food that is safe at home is not safe for you in hospital.


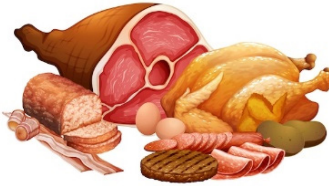


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Type of food	Lower Risk Foods	Higher Risk Foods
Dairy products 	Any pasteurised milk/cream, UHT milk, sterilised milk. UHT squirty cream.	Un pasteurised milk.
	All hard pasteurised cheeses such as cheddar, Stilton & Parmesan. Soft pasteurised cheeses such as cottage cheese, mozzarella, feta, cream cheese, paneer, labneh, ricotta, halloumi, goats' cheese without a white coating on the outside (rind) and processed cheese spreads.	Mould - ripened cheeses e.g. Brie, Camembert. Unpasteurised cheeses e.g. Feta, Parmesan, goat's cheese. Blue-veined cheese e.g. Danish Blue, Blue Stilton (avoid all the above cheeses unless cooked and steaming hot).
	Yoghurt including plain, Greek or fruit that does not describe itself as bio or probiotic. Pasteurised ice cream. Wrapped individual ice creams or ice lollies. Check the food hygiene rating of the shop or van before having soft ice cream.	All live yoghurt. Yoghurt which is described on the label as bio or probiotic*. Probiotic or "bio" foods, drinks or supplements e.g. Yakult, Actimel, Proviva. Ice cream made with unpasteurised 'raw' milk.
Eggs 	Well cooked eggs e.g. Use only Lion branded. Shop bought mayonnaise.	Undercooked (runny) or raw eggs. Products containing raw egg e.g. soufflé, homemade mayonnaise, mousse, meringue. Any dressing containing raw eggs e.g. home or restaurant e.g. Caesar salad dressing. Hollandaise / Béarnaise sauce.

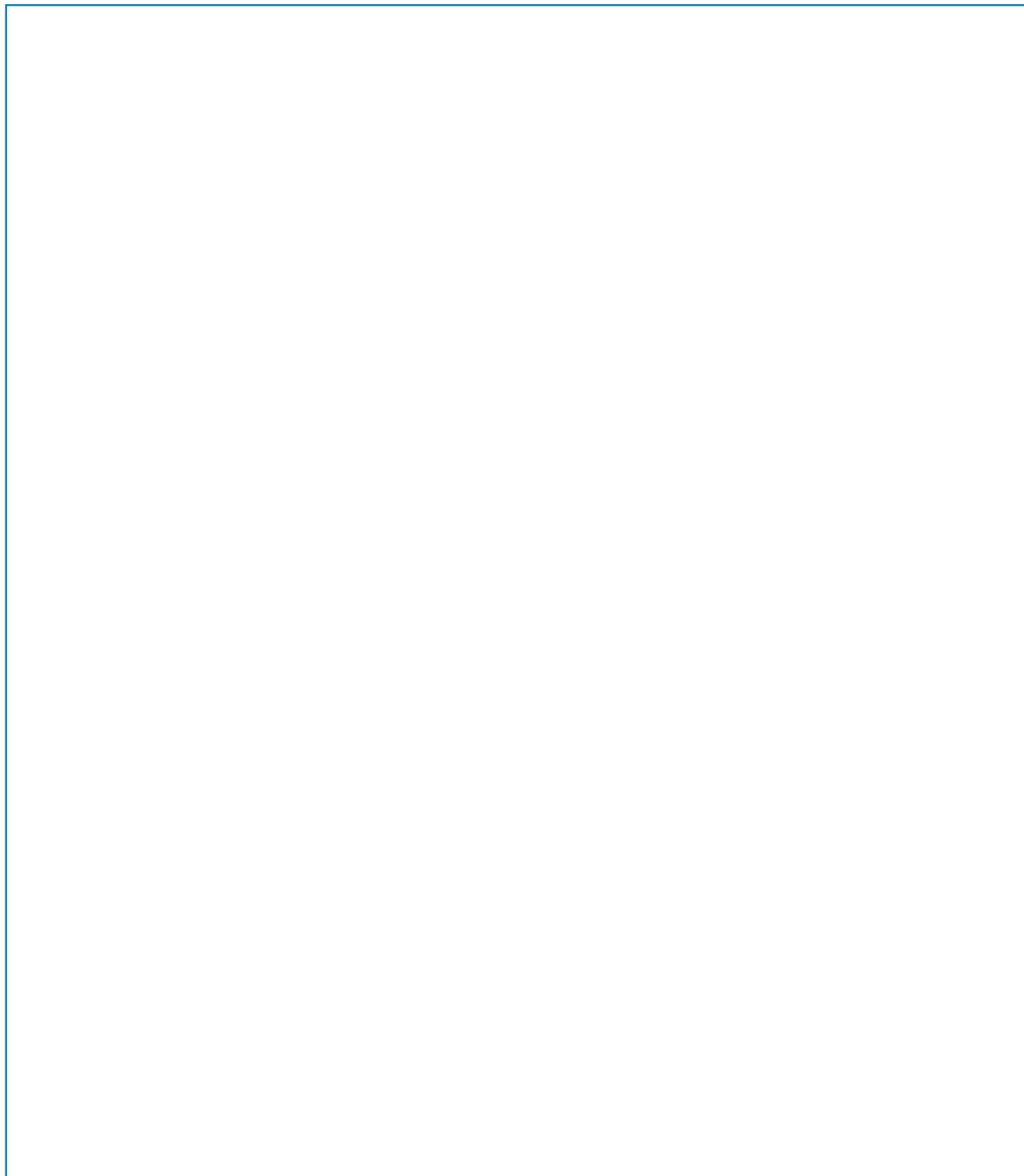
<p>Fish</p> 	<p>Freshly cooked fish, fishcakes, fish fingers. Well-cooked shellfish e.g. prawn curry.</p>	<p>Raw or lightly cooked shellfish e.g. prawns, mussels. Sushi e.g. containing raw fish. Freshly cooked fish, fishcakes, fish fingers. Well-cooked shellfish e.g. prawn curry.</p>
<p>Meat and Poultry</p> 	<p>Well cooked meat and poultry. Juices must run clear and no pink showing. Ensure all meat products like sausages, burgers are well cooked thoroughly. Ensure pork and pork containing products are well cooked.</p>	<p>Raw or undercooked meat and poultry. (Barbecued meat represents a particularly high risk and is best avoided altogether).</p>
<p>Salad, Fruit and Vegetables</p> 	<p>Washed fresh fruit, salads and vegetables - including prepacked salad and fruit. (Ensure all above are well washed under running tap water before eating, as bacteria can be present on the surface). Tinned or frozen. Prepacked olives /houmous.</p>	<p>Unwashed fruit / vegetables or salad. Damaged / over-ripe or bruised fruit. Avoid deli counter foods e.g. salads, olives, houmous.</p>
<p>Water</p> 	<p>If you drink water from a borehole or private water supply this must be boiled prior to drinking. *Freshly run tap water if from local authority supply is considered on the whole safe to drink. Ensure you run your water for a couple of minutes first and that it is a tap that is regularly used.</p>	<p>Un-boiled water that is not from local authority supply.</p>
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<p>Coffee, tea. Pasteurised carton/ bottles of drinks e.g. Oasis, Drench, Fruit shoots, Ribena. Fizzy drinks. Water with a hint of flavours - lemon, peach.</p>	<p>Unpasteurised fruit juices / milkshakes / smoothies.</p>
	<p>Black pepper / herbs and spices e.g. pre packed fresh sealed jars from supermarket. Supermarket bought sealed packages for cereal, nuts, dried fruits, biscuits.</p>	<p>Black pepper / herbs and spices e.g. loose bought products from deli / farm shops. Avoid loose bought 'refill stations' for cereals, nuts & dried fruits.</p>

Note: * It is recognised that on rare occasions, some infections may be transmitted by tap water or private water supplies in Yorkshire and the rest of the UK. Listen to any advice from health/local authority about the need to boil your water supply.

More information on safer shopping and eating can be found at: www.food.gov.uk/food-safety

For any further information please contact your medical team, clinical nurse specialist or dietitian.

A space for notes...

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If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Chemotherapy Nurse Specialist
Chemotherapy Outpatient Unit
CHFT

Telephone: 01484 343600

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਚ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ کی زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم
المذكور أعلاه"