



**CHU
Sainte-Justine**
Le centre hospitalier
universitaire mère-enfant
Université 
de Montréal

Eating Safely with a Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant

Informations for families



Following a bone marrow transplant, your child has a weakened immune system. Therefore, they will be at higher risk of food poisoning (infections), caused by ingesting contaminated food or water with bacteria, viruses or parasites.

During the process of the bone marrow transplant, you will have to be mindful and cautious at every step of food handling: when choosing, preparing, cooking and storing the food.

Subscribe to food recall alerts:

- Food recalls on the MAPAQ website
- Recalls and safety alerts on the Government of Canada website.

How Long?

Food safety and hygiene recommendations must be followed at all times. In terms of food restrictions, the duration varies according to the type of transplant:

- Autologous transplant : 3 months after the transplant
- Allogenic transplant : 6 months or longer (refer to your medical team)

Food Safety and Hygiene

The food safety and hygiene guidelines mentioned in this document aims to avoid and eliminate all possible contaminants (bacteria, viruses, parasites) at every step of food handling, from the grocery store to your child's plate.

At the Grocery Store

- Choose fruits and vegetables in their best shapes and not damaged.
- Do not buy food with damaged packaging.
- Check the best-before date and choose the foods with the latest date.
- Avoid **“cross-contamination”**:
 - › Separate raw meats, poultry, fish and seafood from other foods in your grocery cart.
 - › Keep these foods in separate bags from other foods.
- Pay attention to the **“cold chain”**:
 - › Bring isothermal bags or a cooler with ice packs to the grocery store.
 - › End your shopping in the refrigerated and frozen sections.
 - › Refrigerate perishable foods as soon as possible when you get home.

- ▶ Wash your cooler or your grocery bags often.
- ▶ Do not buy food sold in bulk.

Food Storage

- ▶ Ensure that the refrigerator temperature is 4°C (40°F) or lower, and the freezer temperature is -18°C (0°F) or lower.
- ▶ Place raw meats, poultry, fish and seafood in sealed plastic containers (or bags) on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to prevent their raw juices from dripping onto other foods.
- ▶ Store dry foods (e.g. crackers, cereals) in airtight bags or containers at room temperature.
- ▶ **Do not freeze food that has already thawed.**
- ▶ **Do not leave food normally kept cold or warm sitting at room temperature for more than 2 hours.**
- ▶ Quickly cool leftovers in shallow containers and place them quickly in the refrigerator or freezer.
- ▶ Consult the Safe food storage page (available online on the Health Canada website) for recommended refrigeration and freezing times. Preferably, eat leftovers within two days, or store them in the freezer.

During Food Preparation

- ▶ **Wash kitchen surfaces and utensils:**
 - › Immediately clean surfaces (cutting board, utensils, countertop, sink) that touch raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood.
 - › Avoid “cross-contamination” by using one cutting board designated for ready-to-eat foods and a different one for raw meat, poultry and seafood.
 - › Clean the surface of cans and tins with water before opening.
 - › Use paper towels to scrub kitchen surfaces, and change dishcloths daily.
 - › Avoid using kitchen sponges.
 - › Disinfect counters, cutting boards and utensils before and after food preparation. You can use a bleach solution in a spray container (5ml bleach + 750ml water) and rinse with water.
- ▶ Fruits and vegetables :
 - › Wash your fruits and vegetables before eating or cooking.
 - › Use a brush for fruits and vegetables with firm skins (e.g. carrots, potatoes, melons, etc.).

- › Wash again pre-washed fruits and vegetables.
- › Soak, rinse and drain berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, etc.) at least twice.
- › Do not soak fresh fruits and vegetables in a sink full of water, as the sink may contain bacteria despite a good wash. Use a bowl instead.
- Choose plastic or glass utensils and cutting boards. **Avoid wooden or bamboo ones.**
- **Do not defrost food at room temperature.** Thaw in the refrigerator, microwave or in a sealed bag/container immersed in cold water.
- Avoid bringing your child in contact with uncooked baker's yeast. This does not apply to artificial/chemical yeast (baking powder) or nutritional yeast.

During Cooking

- ALL well-cooked foods are permitted.
- Be sure **to cook thoroughly** meats, poultry, fish and seafood.
- You can also use a digital cooking thermometer to check the internal cooking temperature.
- Ask your nutritionist about safe cooking temperatures.

During Meals

- Wash your hands and the table **before** eating.
- Do not share utensils or food.
- Limit mealtimes to 2 hours. Throw away all uneaten food.

At the Hospital

- During the hospitalization, you may bring prepared food from home, if made according to the recommendations in this document.
- Use a cooler to transport food from home to the hospital to keep it fresh or frozen.
- You will have access to the parents' kitchen (located on the third floor of block 12) to cook for yourself or your child.
 - › Continue to follow hygiene and sanitation rules when cooking in the parents' kitchen;
 - › You will have access to kitchen equipment, but we recommend that you bring a can opener, a good knife, dishwashing soap, paper towels (not dishtowels), snack/freezer bags, airtight food storage containers, a portable blender, etc.;
 - › Be mindful of the other families sharing the same kitchen by immediately cleaning and putting away your dishes after use. Pay attention to the cleanliness of the area;
 - › Store food in identified bins with your child's room number.
- When ordering from the food service (*Délipapilles*) for the first time, keep a set of plates, bowls, metal utensils, plate cover and trivet.
- When you receive a *Délipapilles* order, sanitize the tray, plate cover and every packaged food before bringing them into the room. Wash and dry whole fruit thoroughly.
- Use the plate cover and trivet, or a plastic wrap, to transport your plates and bowls from the parents' kitchen to your child's hospital room.
- Plastic utensils are provided to reduce the intensity of the metallic taste caused by chemotherapy. Metal utensils can still be used.

Food Choices

Water

- ▶ **During the hospitalization:** Bottled water will be provided by the food service (*Délipapilles*).
 - › Once opened, you can keep bottled water for a maximum of 24 hours at room temperature (in the room) or 1 week in the refrigerator. Use the small cardboard cups for drinking, and change the cup every hour.
- ▶ **At home:** You can drink tap water. If your water comes from a well, be sure to have it tested at the frequency recommended by the Quebec government.
 - › Avoid water from a refrigerator-mounted water dispenser or bottled water dispenser.
 - › Avoid ice cubes from an ice machine/maker. Use a covered ice cube tray or an ice cube bag to make your own ice cubes.

Restaurants

- ▶ Avoid salad bars, buffets, fountain drinks and street food.
- ▶ Choose take-out. Avoid delivery.
- ▶ Choose well-cooked foods and make sure it is freshly prepared.
- ▶ Avoid beverages from a soda fountain.
- ▶ Avoid ice cream shops and dairy bars.

Foods to Avoid

Meat and substitutes

- ▶ Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish and seafood.
- ▶ Refrigerated pates and meat spreads (e.g. cretons, Country pâté).
- ▶ Raw or undercooked (runny) eggs and foods that may contain them (e.g. homemade mayonnaise, meringue, custard).
- ▶ Uncooked cured meats, cold cuts, sausages and smoked meats.
- ▶ Raw tofu.
- ▶ Raw fermented soy products (tempeh, miso).
- ▶ Raw nuts and seeds.
- ▶ Sesame paste (tahini) and products containing it (halva, hummus).

Dairy products and substitutes

- ▶ Unpasteurized milk (raw milk) and dairy products made from unpasteurized milk.
- ▶ Mold-ripened cheeses (e.g. blue cheese, Roquefort), raw.
- ▶ Soft cheeses (e.g. Brie, Camembert, Feta, Bocconcini), raw.
- ▶ Semi-firm cheeses (e.g. Havarti, Oka, Saint-Paulin), raw.
- ▶ Low-fat cheeses, raw.
- ▶ Grocery-cut or commercially grated cheeses, raw.
- ▶ Homemade yogurt.
- ▶ Ice cream from a dairy bar.

Vegetables and fruit

- ▶ Sprouts and shoots, raw.
- ▶ Grapefruit, tangelo and pomelo (with Cyclosporine or Tacrolimus).
- ▶ Unpasteurized fruit juices (unless homemade and consumed within 24h).
- ▶ Frozen fruits, uncooked.

Other

- ▶ Raw soy sauce (exceptions may apply; verify the brand with your dietitian)
- ▶ Homemade dried products (meat, fruit, etc.)

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