



Reduce the risk of getting toxoplasmosis while pregnant

Toxoplasmosis is caused by the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*.

The most common way to get it is by:

- swallowing something contaminated with the poo of infected cats
- swallowing or handling the undercooked or raw products or meat of infected animals or birds
- a newly infected mother passing it to her unborn baby
- handling an infected lambing ewe, the afterbirth or her newborn lamb

Sometimes it causes flu-like symptoms. However, it often causes no symptoms so you may not know you've had it. Infection during pregnancy can be dangerous.

It is important to take these simple and sensible precautions to reduce the risk of getting toxoplasmosis:

<p>Store and prepare food carefully.</p> 	<p>Wash or peel raw fruit and vegetables before eating.</p> 	<p>Wash food preparation surfaces and utensils after use.</p> 	<p>Fully cook meat and egg products.</p> 
<p>Don't eat or drink unpasteurised (raw) milk* products.</p> 	<p>Don't eat cured meats like salami, chorizo or Parma ham.</p> 	<p>Don't touch new-born lambs, lambing ewes or the clothes worn by those handling them.</p> 	<p>Wash hands well and often with soap and water.</p> 
<p>Wear gloves when gardening or handling sand or soil.</p> 	<p>If safe try to prevent hunting - use a bell collar.</p> 	<p>Change cat litter daily**. Use a utensil, like a cat litter scoop, to remove poo.</p> 	<p>Don't let cats into your children's sand box. Cover it when not in use.</p> 
<p>Don't feed undercooked or raw meat to your cat.</p> 	<p>It is safe to own a cat while you are pregnant. Avoid cat poo. Be careful with hygiene.</p> 	<p>Always get medical advice if you are worried about your own health or that of your baby.</p> 	<p>For advice about pregnancy or baby and toddler health, visit mychild.ie</p> 

* Unpasteurised milk from goats, cows and sheep can carry bacteria and parasites that cause sickness.

** If possible, ask someone else to change the cat litter. But if you have to do it, wear disposable gloves and wash your hands carefully afterwards.

