

UGM Experts Share Tips on How to Prevent the Spread of Listeria Bacteria

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The government recently asked importers to withdraw the circulation of enoki mushrooms originating from South Korea. It is because enoki mushrooms suspected contained *Listeria monocytogenes* bacteria which caused Extraordinary Events (KLB) in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

UGM Food Safety Expert, Prof. Dr. Ir. Endang S. Rahayu, MS., Said that *Listeria monocytogenes* is one of the pathogenic bacteria that can cause intestinal infection or listeriosis. If people consume these bacteria, it will grow in the intestine and attack the mucosa. Furthermore, it enters the blood vessels and attacks other tissues, including nerves. Can cause severe effects on vulnerable groups such as toddlers, the elderly, and pregnant women.

"Bacteria consumed by pregnant women can also harm the womb," she said on Saturday (6/27).

Trisye, a familiar greeting from the Professor of the Faculty of Agricultural Technology (FTP) UGM, explained that this bacterium is known as a psychrotrophic bacterium that can grow at low temperatures. Able to grow between temperatures 1-44 ° C, with optimum temperatures of 35-37 ° C. However, at 7-10 ° C it can still rise quickly.



Listeria monocytogenes can also survive high salt conditions and pH > 5. Besides, it is also resistant to drying.

"Even so, it will die if exposed to temperature pasteurization which is 80 ° C," explained the Head of UGM Center for Food and Nutrition Studies (PSPG).

Listeria monocytogenes are usually widely distributed in soil, dirt, faeces, drains, and unclean equipment. At the same time, foods that are often contaminated are various types of food that often stored in cold temperatures.

Therefore, Trisye urges people to pack food properly when stored in the refrigerator. Separate foodstuffs that are ready to eat and ready to process. When storing vegetables, including enoki, should be placed in a separate plastic container. Besides, make sure not to mix it with fruits that are ready to eat to avoid cross-contamination.

"If vegetables, including enoki, are processed by heating the bacteria, they can die. The danger is that the bacteria move to the fruit and reproduce, while the fruit is eaten immediately without washing first, it can cause disease, " Trisye explained.

He said the incubation period for Listeria monocytogenes infection lasted 1-7 days. Several symptoms usually appear, including fever, abdominal pain, and diarrhoea.

To prevent bacterial contamination of food, Trisye reminded the public always to implement proper sanitation and personal hygiene. That way, it is expected to minimize disease infections in the body through food consumption.

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